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THE
RETROSPECT;

OR,

REVIEW OF PROVIDENTIAL MERCIES:

WITH ANECDOTES OF VARIOUS CHARACTERS.

BY ALIQUIS, *epseud.*

FORMERLY A LIEUTENANT IN THE ROYAL NAVY, AND NOW A MINISTER
IN THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

Richard Marks

Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once, and others of a life to come.—*Cowper.*

FROM THE SEVENTEENTH LONDON EDITION.

NEW YORK:
ROBERT CARTER,
58 CANAL STREET.

1841.



P R E F A C E
TO
THE FIFTEENTH EDITION.

SINCE the first edition of this little work, the writer has often been rebuked for not extending his narratives of others, and has as often been requested to communicate more circumstances connected with himself. To these rebukes and solicitations he continued to turn a deaf ear, from what he now believes to be mistaken motives. While lately doubting these motives, he cast his eyes on the title page, and read, "*The Retrospect ; or, Review of Providential Mercies, &c.*" and his mind was considerably affected. Yes, he said, these pages are a retrospective glance at a few events which marked a limited portion of my days. With gratitude and surprise I perceive that *fourteen* editions of these humble tales

have gone into the world, and with sorrow and confusion I have to confess, that nothing has been added to the original matter. His conscience smote him; a voice seemed to ask, "Have you, during all this period, recollected nothing more of the Lord's goodness and mercy, either before you embarked on the sea, or while you were there? And has nothing transpired during all the years that have fled since you wound up your Retrospect, worthy of being recorded to the praise of the riches of divine grace?" He paused, reflected, and felt himself condemned in that he had not made known some more circumstances connected with himself and with others, as well before he embarked, and while he was afloat, as since he had quitted a maritime life. Under these impressions he resumed his pen, and not only added various paragraphs to several of the original tales, but also drew up the nine additional Chapters, which in this edition are numbered as I, XII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVIII, XIX, XX, and XXI.

To such readers as were interested with the work in its former size and limited range, it is hoped and believed that this enlarged edition will

prove acceptable. If, in these additional chapters, the writer has detailed many little things concerning himself, it has been, he can most solemnly declare, with the view of glorifying God, and of encouraging his readers to attempt such-like duties whenever Providence may throw them within their reach. That such may be the result, he most sincerely prays; while at the same time he would praise and adore that condescending grace which has gone with the former editions so greatly beyond all his hopes and expectations.

What was stated in the former preface may here be repeated, namely, that the reader must not look for a regular and unbroken history, either of the state of the writer's mind, or of all the events which made up the years under review. For even in this *enlarged edition* the chapters convey but a partial, and often an unconnected account of both; and these, not unfrequently interspersed with other matters. System has never, in this work, been any part of his plan, and must not be looked for by the reader. His aim and desire have rather been so to construct each chapter, that of itself it might pro-

duce some facts and reflections, which, by the blessing of God, would exhibit proofs of the mercy and kind providences of heaven as continually attending on, and over-ruling the events of human life, and all the affairs of men; that so in this, as in all things, God might be glorified through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

R. M.

THE
RETROSPECT.

CHAPTER I.

“FOOLISHNESS IS BOUND IN THE HEART OF A CHILD.”

PROV. xxii. 15.

YES, and such “*foolishness*” as constitutes *sin*; for, be it remembered, that the terms “*fool*” and “*foolishness*” are employed in holy writ to convey a meaning far more solemn and emphatic than is now generally attached to them. The “*fool*” is, in fact, one who wilfully disobeys or denies the authority of God; and “*foolishness*” means that innate self-will, and propensity to, and delight in disobedience to the divine commands, which we find in the heart of every unrenewed child of Adam. Hence, it is one of the great and gracious works of the Holy Spirit, in regenerating mankind, to supplant this “*foolishness*,” and to make them wise unto salvation, by a heart-purifying faith in Jesus Christ, a faith which works by love, and constrains to a willing and unre-served obedience. Thus does the rod of divine correction and mercy drive it out; and no sooner is this work accomplished, than the subject of so necessary and mo-

mentous a transformation, stands forth a wonder unto many, and still more, a wonder unto himself! From an elevation in mental and spiritual attainments, he now looks back on all the way the Lord hath led him, and sees how, through all the days of his childhood and youth, of his manhood and old age, this "folly" maintained its hold on his heart; and now he feels, beyond the power of words to express, that nothing short of infinite mercy and goodness preserved him from a thousand destructions of body and of soul, into which "this foolishness" was continually hurrying him. Through all, which recollection can now bring forward of his own conduct, he sees cause for humiliation and confession of sin; through all his review of the Divine proceedings towards him in past times, he can discover nothing but unmerited compassion, and unbounded goodness and mercy. If ever one poor soul needed and received the kind offices of those angels who are the Lord's ministering servants unto the heirs of salvation, he feels assured that he himself has been that individual, and still continues to be so. There are, however, some events to which his recollections will turn with more than ordinary feeling of interest; because, in them the superintending providence of God will be more distinctly seen than in others. Such were two that occurred before I embarked on the rude and dangerous ocean; the first to which I shall allude took place when I was quite a lad.

From my earliest days I had felt a strong partiality for the water, for boisterous sports, and exploits with gunpowder, and, in short, for deeds of thoughtless mischief and dangerous enterprize. In these things I

reaped my harvest of what headstrong boys term happiness; and in these pursuits my life was so frequently brought to the very edge of destruction, that, in the retrospect, I am truly astonished at the unwearied and ever watchful care of that God whose hand I then saw not, and whose goodness and mercy were alike unfelt and unknown. It was in the evening of a fine summer day, when an elderly matron aunt, who at that time was superintending the affairs of our family in the absence of that kind and beloved mother whom we had lately followed to the grave, invited myself and a younger brother to walk out for the enjoyment of the air. As we had no rivers in our part of the country, our only bathing places were two large sheets of water, or ponds, in the fields. Our excursion that evening led into an inclosure, whose distant extremity bordered on the largest of these two favourite places; the temptation was a powerful one, and my heart yielded so readily, that in defiance of threats and invitations, I ran off, and, although none of my companions or any individual were there, I stript and entered the water. I could not swim; but I seldom had visited these places of amusement without going chin-deep into them, a thing I had often done in this very water, but then it had always been on the opposite side. My thoughtlessness and blindness to danger took for granted, that as I hitherto had received no harm, I should encounter none for the time to come. And of one serious fact I was then entirely ignorant, and there was none present to inform me, namely, that a few years ago the pond had been laid dry, and a great deepening made on this side by

digging gravel. As my aunt and brother had been unable to retain me with them, they proceeded to walk across the field, and arrived at the margin of the water just in time to hear me cry out for help, and to see me go down. The truth is, I had but for a short time enjoyed the fruits of my "*foolishness*," before I stumbled into the deep gravel pits, and was quickly out of sight. What the feelings of the standers by were I cannot realize; but I have, at this hour, a tolerable recollection of my own convulsive struggles, of the state of suffocation I endured, of the general confusion, as well as of the few distinct thoughts which preyed on the mind, though I cannot convey the import of these recollections to another person; nor need any one regret his inability to realize them. I can only say, that what I then felt and feared, have, on many subsequent occasions, much increased the agonies of my mind while commiserating others whom I have seen struggling, sinking, and dying in the briny deep, without being able to afford them any assistance.

As far as my observations have gone, it seems, that persons in deep water, under circumstances any way similar to mine, do generally, in the convulsive struggles of suffocation, come to the surface two or three times, never oftener, and frequently not so often. In my struggling, after first going down, I rose for a few seconds, and then sunk, and rose again; and again I went down, and once more I appeared at the surface! During this short and awful period, my brother, who was naturally timid and irresolute, seemed to be inspired with a new nature and wisdom beyond his age, and

former self; so that, instead of being paralyzed or frantic with what quite overpowered my aunt, he flew to that part of the bank nearest to which I had last appeared, and holding on with one hand by some branches of a dwarf tree, he threw his body, as far as possible, over the pond, if peradventure I might come up again within his reach. Scarcely had he thus taken his stand, than I came, for the third time, to the surface, and, unconscious of his situation, I threw my arm involuntarily, and at full stretch, in a direct line towards his, which was already extended to its full length; by this means he was just enabled to grasp my wrist, to drag my head above water, and eventually to get me on dry ground, in a state of as much exhaustion as was possible to sustain, with the preservation of the senses and recollection. Thus did a kind and gracious Providence snatch me from a watery grave in my very youth, and make it evident to every reflecting believer in holy writ, that *it was His work*. I have never thought of this event for many years past, without seeing the finger of God in all its parts. The conduct of my brother on this occasion was altogether above himself; and then, had I not come up where I actually did, and thrown out the arm exactly where I involuntarily extended it, I must have gone down, and in a few seconds more have rested my poor perishing frame on the deep gravel bottom, in all the quietude of death; while the soul, untaught and uninterested in that Holy Name whereby alone man can be saved, would have returned unto God who gave it, to give an account of all the deeds done in the body.

The second providential deliverance I shall now refer to, was an hair-breadth escape from being shot. This occurred about two years before I went to sea. As guns and gunpowder, and every thing connected with them, had, as before observed, from my earliest days, been ranked by me among the most desirable acquisitions on earth, I could not rest satisfied until I was possessed of a fowling-piece, and all the materials necessary to kill whatever I considered lawful to destroy, as often as such should come in my way. All this I was, however, obliged to keep secret from those who held authority and controul over me, because none of them would consent to my using, much less possessing a gun. I knew their feelings too well on this subject to make the request, and I disregarded them sufficiently to set every wish and command at defiance, provided I could but disobey with impunity. Hence, when I could make the purchase without detection, I did so, and proceeded in the clandestine use of it. Perhaps, at that time, there were few creatures more reckless of danger, or more thoughtless of the consequences of actions, than myself. As one proof, I almost always kept my gun loaded with a frightful overcharge, and hid away in the spare stall in the stable among the dry straw, from whence I removed it by stealth, as often as the temptation to fire, and some game came in my way. On one of these occasions, I had sharply pecked the flint, reprimed the piece, and was hastening out to delight my "*foolish heart,*" at the expense of the sufferings and death of some poor little innocent birds in the adjoining meadow, when my gun went off of itself. By way of getting

out of the stable without the piece being observed, I had placed it under my coat, and strange to say, with the butt end downwards, and the muzzle a little above the grasp of the shoulder joint of the left arm ; in this way I had nearly got out, when the discharge took place. Whether I had left the piece cocked, or whether I struck the lock against the door or door-post, I know not ; but one thing I did then know, and do now most distinctly remember, that the violence of the explosion, and the nearness of it to my head, both stunned and greatly alarmed me ; while it inflicted an injury on the organs of the left ear, from which they have never wholly recovered. I had no hat on at that time, or a portion of it must have been shot away ; as it was, the contents of the piece cut a four inch square rafter nearly in two directly over my head, while these missiles of death were in mercy carried a very, very little way from the side of the head itself. This event had the momentary effect of inducing me to sell my gun, and to make a resolution to have no more to do with fire-arms. And so had my narrow escape from being drowned produced, at that time, a like momentary resolution to avoid the water in future ; but so far from my "*foolish heart*" being bound and stayed to these purposes by such self-formed determinations, I broke through them all as far as possible ; and soon after this last providential escape, I began to take greater delight than ever in hearing and reading of storms, of shipwrecks, and battles ; and the more I heard and read of these things, the more I longed to become experimentally acquainted with them. Added to this, the same foolish heart had formed

and fondly cherished the wildest ideas of happiness at sea! Many were the ruffs, and buffs, and corrections, which my wayward conduct procured me; and under the smart of these I generally consoled myself with the thought, that if I should not find myself, by and by, as happy as heart could wish on the land, I had nothing to do but to embark on the wide ocean, and there, as a matter of course, I should find all that I longed for, but had not found on shore! With such visionary expectations my deceived heart turned me aside from the comforts and quietude of home, to embark in the navy, where I traversed that ocean of supposed enjoyment far and wide, but not far enough to find the happiness I once dreamt of as being its every day's production, at all seasons, and in all portions of the globe.

CHAPTER II.

“BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL, AND FORGET NOT ALL HIS BENEFITS.”—PSALM ciii. 2.

THERE are few, perhaps none, of the followers of Christ, who may not find numerous occasions of lifting up their eyes and hearts to heaven, and saying, from time to time, “Hitherto the Lord hath helped.” Indeed we may confidently ask, Who is there among the sons and daughters of Adam, that hath travelled the journey of life for twenty or thirty years, but may look back and remember numerous instances of divine goodness, manifesting itself in a way of providence and grace? And are “our days, as it were, but a span long?” Surely, then, it is our duty and privilege to improve them, and call in every auxiliary circumstance to help us to apply them to spiritual wisdom. To this end I would recommend my fellow Christians to make a point of recording in their minds such principal events as have marked, and still may mark, their course, while travellers and sojourners on earth; that so they may be able to say, it was on this day the Lord delivered me from such a danger, from such a snare, from such a threatening storm—this was the day when the Almighty proved better to me than all my fears—that was the day

whereon he stretched forth his hand and saved me, and set my feet upon a rock, and ordered my goings, and put a new song in my mouth. Thus every month may be registered, and a sort of calendar made out, to which the soul may occasionally refer, and find sweet matter of thanksgiving and praise. Some men's lives, it is true, are chequered with more extraordinary events and changes than those of others; yet the most tranquil course of the most retired Christian will not be without its interesting events and its memorable days; interesting and memorable at least to themselves, although the circumstances which made them so may not furnish any new or striking matter for the consideration of others. But when the reverse has been the case; when the Almighty has appeared for us in any peculiar way of providence or grace, then it becomes a positive duty not only to record his dealings on the tablet of our memory, and be thankful, but on all proper occasions to imitate the pious king of Israel, who exclaimed, "Come hither, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul." This I think may often be done in our own families, and among our more intimate christian friends, to the edification of all present.

The return of the second of February has led me to these observations, because it was on this day the tender mercies of God were greatly extended towards me. It is now sixteen years past, when posting down the broad road of destruction, loud in blasphemy, and ever ready to burlesque and condemn the Holy Scriptures, that my life was spared, while several of my companions in sin

perished!* Ignorant of the world, and impatient of controul, I had previously broken away from the constraint of social authority, and embarked on the great deep, in pursuit of honours and fancied happiness, which, as hinted in the foregoing chapter, I imagined were the every day scenes of a naval life; there, like others, I had to contend with the storms and dangers of an element, emblematical of the sinner's mind, never at rest, and to learn at an early period of my adventures, that in not a few things,

“The very wish is in possession lost.”

How great the contrast between this and the day alluded to! Few seasons ever witnessed a more serene and delightful day than this has been; few ever beheld one more tempestuous and severe than that in which our ship was stranded amidst shoals of ice on a foreign coast.

Methinks I now see the wreck lying on its side, and hear the howling northern blast roar through the confused and mangled tackling; methinks I now see the crew leaving this untenable abode, and betaking themselves to the rugged field of ice and snow with which we were surrounded! Memory again presents in full view all the dismal severities of that afternoon, when fifteen of my companions perished from the effects of cold in the space of three hours. It brings before me

* This date refers to the time when this paper was first written, and made its appearance in *The Christian Guardian*, or *Church of England Magazine*.

the gracious and visible interposition of Providence in preserving not only myself, but all the first party who quitted the wreck, from what would otherwise have been inevitable destruction.* As it was, I seem again to look over the dreary waste, and behold the scattered travellers, some in little groups, others alone; some growing faint, others stumbling and falling on their slippery and deceitful road; some benumbed and ex-

* I shall observe, by way of note, that from the wreck we had a view of a building, at a considerable distance on the shore, and for this object we directed our course when we quitted the vessel. But we had not gone far, ere a snow storm came on, and obscured our view; and as the wind and drift came from the very point on which we had to proceed, its severity was felt to the utmost, and caused us imperceptibly to edge off to the right hand, and travel in a direction which, if continued, would have carried us off the shoal and field of ice into the sea; or, at best, by the time we had discovered our situation, it would have taken us so far from any place of shelter, as to have left us to perish on the ice and snow during the night. This dreadful calamity was, however, prevented by one of our party having a pocket compass about him. He had taken the bearings of the above-mentioned object previous to leaving the wreck, and after some travelling, was induced to examine the course we were actually pursuing. To our surprise, it was discovered how widely we were, and had been deviating from the right line. This, however, enabled all but one of the party to correct their march, though at the expense of many additional and laborious steps. The one who formed an exception was an exceedingly strong man, who had outstripped us all, and was too far in advance to notice our signals of recal, when we altered our course; and as the snow soon hid him from our view altogether, we had no doubt but he travelled on until he either fell into the sea, or found himself totally bewildered and out of all reach of shelter, and perished on the ice long before the light of another day.

pressing their misery ; others endeavouring to cheer up their spirits ; some taking their seats on massy pieces of ice, and others in vain endeavouring to urge them on in the prosecution of their journey. Methinks I now see the gloom of that evening, and the departure of its early twilight, which just lighted my weary feet to the secure and friendly habitations of man ; and I seem again to feel the toil and labour with which I mounted the sea-guard bank that had been thrown up around the walls and little domain of this timely and merciful refuge. Nor is this all which the same record brings before me ; it calls on me to blush with shame and confusion of face at the recollection of my then worse than brutal insensibility and hardness of heart. For I know that not only then, but long afterwards, I lived as without God in the world, having no saving scriptural knowledge, no gospel hope. I was truly an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger to the covenant of promise. O Lord ! what shall I render unto thee for thy unnumbered mercies ? How shall I, how can I, sufficiently adore that forbearance and tender compassion which spared and supported me through all the struggles and dangers connected with this my first shipwreck ? Had I this day sixteen years ago been numbered among those who fell, O where, where would my immortal soul have now been ? Where, but in hell ! suffering the righteous judgments of abused mercy and insulted majesty !—beholding the felicity of the redeemed and the glory of the Redeemer ; but myself afar off ! May I never allow the return of this season to pass by without gratefully acknowledging thy

goodness, and endeavouring to raise my mind to high and holy contemplations on Thee, thou Triune Jehovah, as the author of all mercies, and giver of every good and perfect gift! Should to-morrow's sun rise amidst clouds and storms, and drifting hail and snow, let it give me a realizing sense of the dangers I have passed, and while I am experiencing the comforts of a house, a home, and a fire-side, may I not forget the sufferings, the agonizing pains of those who, at this season, fell to rise no more.* But especially when yonder leafless trees, groaning beneath the winter's blast, send forth the hollow roar, and mimic the voice of storms at sea—when the frame of my cottage trembles under the pressure of sudden squalls and gusts of wind,

“ When winter comes! when polar spirits sweep
The darkening world, and tempest-troubled deep!
When boundless snows the wither'd heath deform,
And the dim sun scarce wanders through the storm:”

O then may I in a more especial manner bear in my mind, in my heart, and in my prayers, those multitudes

* With respect to those who fall victims to the severity of cold, there can be no doubt but many of them go off without experiencing any other sensible pain or inconvenience than that of great fatigue and an unconquerable drowsiness, which latter seems rather to relieve them from their perceptions of cold than otherwise, and to dismiss the spirit apparently without a struggle. But in others it is far different, as appeared in the case of more than one of my departed fellow-travellers, whose drowsy fit or first sleep was followed by strong and agonizing convulsions, in which they beat themselves against the ice, so as greatly to disfigure their persons. One poor man absolutely severed the strong bone of his thumb in two between his own teeth.

who are still traversing these waters, encountering all the severity of such seasons, and all the perils of the deep. And O! most gracious God! may all thy children, under all the variety of circumstances and situations in which they are placed, call to mind thy former mercies, and laud and magnify thy holy name, until removed from this lower, this troubled and sinful world, they unite with that innumerable host around thy throne, in ascribing "blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour and power, and might, unto God and the Lamb for ever and ever."

CHAPTER III.

“ONE SHALL BE TAKEN, AND THE OTHER LEFT.”

MATT. xxiv. 40, 41.

IN the course of my earthly pilgrimage I have witnessed many a literal fulfilment of the above prediction, both by sea and land. But there was one in particular, which took place on the memorable second of February, an account of which may not be unacceptable to the reader.—We had two females on board our frigate. The one was a robust, masculine woman, who had been at sea with her husband for more than two years, and consequently was inured to all the privations and hardships of a maritime life: the other was an entire stranger to such a mode of existence. She had never been twelve hours on ship-board until the evening she came off to see her husband, whom we had impressed the last time we anchored in their roadstead.—Scarcely had this woman, timid and full of alarm, got on our decks, ere the weather became stormy, and the night set in. There was now no alternative, but patiently waiting for the return of day, or fairer weather. But that very night, our destination to port, where we expected to refit and recruit after a dismal cruise off the coast of Norway, was countermanded. Some men of consid-

erable political importance came on board, and we were ordered to sea at an hour's notice, and our visitor was thus unavoidably carried from her home and friends. She was indeed with her husband (a consolation not small to an affectionate wife :) but then she was not only an entire stranger to the scenes and inconveniences of a ship at sea, but was in herself a very tender and delicate woman, and, moreover, near the time of her confinement. As the weather continued rough, sea-sickness, and a thousand fears, seized on her, and in the course of the day she was delivered of a dead child.

Eighteen hours after this event, our ship struck the ground, and was stranded, notwithstanding all the efforts used to save her. Thirty hours more had barely elapsed, when our poor companion was called on to travel, or rather to stumble, through ice and snow ; to set her face against the severity of such a storm of wind, and hail, and sleet, as overcame some of the apparently strongest of the crew. In short, she had to travel that journey, and to endure that weather, under which fifteen perished.

Now, my reader, figure to yourself these two females quitting the wreck ; and in one behold every thing of hardihood, in the other every thing the reverse. What would your expectations have been ? Doubtless, that the former bid fair to sustain, if not to surmount, all existing difficulties ; that the latter must inevitably and speedily sink under them. Yet the contrary happened. The hale maritime character perished by the way) having first had her child, a fine boy of nine months old, frozen to death in her arms,) the delicate invalid endured all the severities of that afternoon, held on through the

journey, arrived safe and uninjured at a friendly cottage, and for aught I know to the contrary, is still living! Should any one ask how this could be, or should he inquire what assistance was rendered these females, I shall briefly observe, it is not the character of British seamen to shrink from danger, or pass by a friend in distress. Many of the crew, indeed, were too much benumbed and exhausted to afford relief to others; yet there were some who, feeling less oppressed in themselves, could and did stretch forth a helping hand to their weaker comrades.—The two women in question received much of this attention from officers and men. But, alas! the storm blew with all the severity of a Siberian winter's blast, and none could shelter another from its fury—it seemed to pierce the very bones and the marrow; and animal heat was almost extinguished; the blood could but slowly circulate, even in the strongest; an unconquerable degree of lassitude and drowsiness seized on our unfortunate female traveller, in common with the others who fell; she halted, she sat down, she closed her eyes, convulsions seized her, and she died. If, then, we would ascertain how the other was enabled to survive the hardships with which she was surrounded, we must look beyond natural causes and effects, even unto the will of Him whose ever-watchful and over-ruling Providence numbers the hairs on our heads, and suffers not a sparrow to fall to the ground without his permission. We must look unto Him “who ordereth all things after the counsel of his own will;” to Him whom storms and waves obey; who can deprive the intensely heated furnace of all its pow-

ers to burn, and the northern frost and hail of all their powers to chill and extinguish life ; to Him who, in the dispensations of his providence, hath told us, that, on many occasions, " One shall be taken, and the other left." In so doing, we shall oft-times be compelled to acknowledge the short-sightedness of man—the folly of all human sagacity—the emptiness of all calculations. These things may indeed perplex, and at times almost confound us, especially if we suffer the mind to indulge in putting the question, " Why are they so?" But wherefore should we indulge in any such idle and presumptuous inquiries? Is not the Eternal Jehovah omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent? Can He be ignorant of any passing event? Can He lack power to perform his will, or can that will be other than supremely good, and just, and holy? Impossible.—Then let us learn to rest all secret, deep, and undiscovered things with Him to whom they belong, and study those which are revealed. Thus shall we know all necessary and essential truths, and these truths will set us free from all that perplexity of error, that chaos of manifold evil and confusion into which a proud un-humbled speculative mind has led thousands, who, like their rebellious prototypes, as described by Milton,

"Have found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost—
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy!"

This life is at best a compound of many bitters, with a few sweets—our cup contains a mingled potion, capable of being rendered more or less unpleasant as we learn

to acquiesce in all the divine will concerning us. As then we would hope for, as we would desire to enjoy something like happiness on this side of heaven, let us learn not to cavil at the dispensations of Him, who, being the judge of all the earth, and the disposer of all events, must do right. If any presumptuous inquirer ask us, why ten talents are given to one man, and but two to another; or why those who were first in our estimation become last; and those whom we once expected to be last, do evidently become first? let us "not be careful to answer them in these matters." Or if, when the destroying angel goes forth in the pestilence, the famine, or the sword, we are asked, why one nation is singled out in preference to another; why one individual is taken and another left? on all these occasions let us direct our eyes to heaven, and with the spirit of a little child, reply in the words of our blessed Redeemer, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." As to the events more immediately under our present consideration; if it pleased the divine Majesty, by almost a miracle, to save the poor enfeebled woman by way of displaying his great power and goodness—to take the child in proof of his love and tender compassion, and to call the strong woman in token of his righteous judgments, who shall say unto Him, What doest thou?

Had the sick invalid perished, it would have been considered as a matter of course, and God would not have received the honour due unto his name; and had the babe survived, the same reasoning might have attributed his preservation to the flannels with which he

was inwrapped, and not to God, with whom are the issues of life and death. What is more; had he survived that day he might have journeyed on through a long life of sin and wretchedness, and in the end been eternally lost! But this early summons was a sure and gracious removal from the evil to come. Henceforth that tongue will certainly be employed in the alleluias of heaven, which otherwise might have been exercised through eternal ages in these fruitless and self-condemning words, "My harvest is past, my summer is ended, and I am not saved." We know the same God of providence could have thus dealt with the parent, ere she knew the distinction between mother and child; but it was his good pleasure to act otherwise, and for more than thirty years to say unto her, Live. Whether, therefore, she had given these years unto him, or to the world and the flesh—whether she had laid up a treasure in heaven, or was still cleaving to the earth; he in whose hands are the spirits of all flesh, had an undoubted right to call hers into his presence, to give, as at this time, an account of the things done in the body.

Those happy, holy, ethereal spirits who minister to man on earth, did unquestionably notice the flight of these two souls to the tribunal of their Judge. But whether they saw them both seated on high, or whether they beheld them conducted to different habitations, we are not informed. All we know in this particular, and all that concerns us to know is, that the Lord ever hath judged righteous judgment, and that He ever will do so; although in this instance it should hereafter appear that "one was taken and the other left."

CHAPTER IV.

“ I WAS A STRANGER AND THEY TOOK ME IN.”

MATT. XXV. 35.

I PERCEIVE the retrospective view of past days has opened a wide field of matter for my mind to reflect on, and for my pen to describe ; “ and now I am in a strait.” If I allow it to proceed, I may possibly incur the charge of egotism and vanity ; if I throw it by, I bury many instances of the Almighty’s goodness and mercy in eternal oblivion.—Perhaps it is not either prudent or safe for men to say much about themselves. At all events they should be well satisfied as to their motives for so doing ; and these motives undoubtedly ought to be, the glory of God and the edification of man.—Now, as, on the whole, I trust they are mine, I am encouraged to proceed. The Lord knows I have nothing to be vain of. I make no pretensions to literary distinction ; but while I cheerfully honour those to whom honour in this respect is due, I would endeavour to improve my own smaller talent, and, as a plain man, attempt the edification of plain minds. My short papers are not intended for, nor will they be calculated to please the light and trifling reader, or to delight a refined and critical taste. They will be plain and serious essays, uniformly exhibiting the boundless goodness, and the long forbear-

ance of God on the one hand, and my own sad spiritual stupidity and rebellion on the other. A review of the former may, through grace, arouse the dormant feelings of my soul, ever prone to cleave unto the dust; while the latter may induce some portion of real self-abasement.—If so, my little memorials will be useful to myself, although they should not edify others—my own soul will be profited, and God will in the result be glorified through Jesus Christ. To this end I must once more refer to the wreck noticed in the second chapter, and call the reader's attention to another series of mercies and sufferings connected with that event.

It was on a Saturday we quitted the vessel, and fled (as the only possible shelter) to the small island of ———, distant from the shoal on which our ship was stranded about six miles; this we were enabled to do by the ice forming a mass from the wreck to the embankment of the island. Within this bank five families dwelt, as the sole inhabitants. The island itself was separated from the main by a shallow channel, whose depth in water, and extent of breadth, varied according to the time of tide and the state of the weather. Now, as it frequently happened, that, for several weeks during winter, all intercourse between the islanders and their opposite neighbours on the continent was impracticable; the former always laid in a stock of provisions before that season commenced. They had done so this year, and appeared amply supplied for themselves until the severe weather should break up. But as our arrival had added more than a hundred and fifty consumers, no one will be surprised that a serious alarm was felt as to

the consequence. In short, it became absolutely necessary for all who were capable of travelling to endeavour, by every means, to gain the opposite shore, from whence the large town of C—— was not far distant.

On Sunday a company of men, composed of the islanders and our crew, were sent to explore a passage; these returned with a very favourable report, assuring us that we could walk on the ice nearly the whole way, and that the part of the channel which still continued open might be forded in the shallow depth of two feet water. Arrangements were accordingly made to set off by moonlight at four o'clock next morning; and had we not delayed two hours, I think we should have found things as reported. But it was six o'clock before we began our march, and by that time the flood tide had considerably set in, and broken up much ice, which, two hours ago, was solid and stationary. We of course soon got into the water, and finding it about the depth described by our guides, thought ourselves in the middle of the channel, and expected very soon to tread the firm soil. But a quarter of an hour's walking, or rather fording, without being yet in sight of the termination of the water, sadly convinced us of our mistake, and half an hour saw us literally surrounded by the sea on all sides, our guides bewildered, and the main land undistinguishable, from the snow and ice which floated about us.—This was a dreary morning indeed! The recollection of it, at this distance of time, throws a sort of chill into my blood. Few people are aware of the excessive toil of walking for any length of time in water which is too deep to admit the feet above its surface;

with us it sometimes was not more than up to the knees, at others nearly breast high, but in general about two feet deep. Much time had been expended before we in reality came to the middle or deepest part of the channel; here the stream ran with great violence, and had I not been most providentially furnished with a strong stick, I must have been carried off my feet, and rolled down with the current. But by setting my staff firmly to the right, I was enabled to resist the pressure of the stream on my left; yet when I got out of this place into shallower water, I found my strength and spirits so nearly exhausted, that I began to revolve in my mind what must (as I thought) shortly follow, namely, a miserable death in a foreign land. Nor was I the only one whose thoughts foreboded evil. Some would absolutely have given up all further exertion, had it not been for the encouraging view we soon obtained of some cottages, peeping as it were through the snow, at the distance of about a mile from us. There was one which stood more detached than the others; it was nearest to me, and thither I directed my course, and in half an hour's time was once more in safety beneath the roof of a family dwelling. It consisted of two distinct parts; the one for the residence of the household, the other for housing and threshing of grain. It was the latter I entered, where the owner was beating out some corn. By this time nature was so far exhausted, that at the instant in which exertion for life ceased to be necessary, in that instant I sunk under my fatigue and cold, and fell on the straw the poor man was threshing. Astonished as he must have been at the appearance of a

stranger, and more so at my conduct, I remember he laid by his flail, and came and viewed me for some seconds, with evident pity and surprise. He spoke, but I neither understood what he said, nor could I make him sensible of much which I wished to communicate; but judging from my ice-clad state, that I must be extremely cold, he made signs for me to go to a fire; this, however, I refrained from doing for the present, having witnessed the fatal effects of such a step in others.

Before I quitted the island, I had tied a little bundle (all my then worldly wealth) on my shoulder, containing a shirt, a pair of stockings, and a pair of woollen trowsers. This bundle I had again and again endeavoured to disengage myself of, while toiling in the water, but the cold had so benumbed my hands as to prevent me accomplishing my desire. Vexed as I had been, and angry at my little load, I now found it a great mercy, that I had not succeeded in throwing it away: its contents, being still dry, proved an invaluable treasure. At length I made the farmer sensible that I wanted it untied, and my icy clothes stripped off. These kind offices he soon performed, and in ten minutes time, partly from my own bundle, and partly from the poor farmer's wardrobe, I was dry and warm clad; the good Samaritan having previously ran in and brought a glass of gin, which I drank, and found my strength and spirits quickly revived. By this time the rest of the family were informed of their visitor, and two elderly matrons came and gazed on me for some minutes without speaking. Perhaps they had sons who had left them, and, as they seemed to think, might be as forlorn

in some distant land as I appeared to be in theirs. There certainly was much parental kindness, and a portion of grief in their countenances.

These kind women took me from the threshing-floor into their sitting-room, brought me a little more gin,* and then hastened to get ready some dried beef and coffee, all of which I partook of with the family. It was nine o'clock when I arrived at this friendly asylum, so that it appeared I had been nearly two hours in the water. Being the only person who sought refuge here, I partook of the undivided kindness and attention of all the household, with whom I remained till three in the

* The pernicious effects of ardent spirits were not at that time so well understood as they are now, either by myself or the public. I am now quite certain that a cup of hot coffee would have been far more beneficial than this gin, even within doors, and infinitely more so when exposed to a storm. Before we quitted the wreck, a portion of brandy had been served out for the men to drink on their journey over the ice and through the snow—the effects of which were most pernicious. I now speak from recollection and experience; neither I nor any other individual drank much on the occasion, but what I did take, though it produced a momentary glow on the stomach, and a transient animation of spirits, yet it left the whole frame so weakened and wasting, that from that very day, I made up my mind, never, if exposed to such circumstances again, to drink any. During this second journey, which was more trying than the former, we had no spirituous liquors among us; and we bore up with so much more strength as not to lose one man by the way. Most thoroughly am I now convinced that all men at sea and on shore, in all changes of weather and climate, and in all the various labours and callings of life, would do well to *abstain entirely from the use of distilled spirits, except for medicinal purposes,*

afternoon; when finding that the whole of my companions had proceeded, either in carts or on foot, to C—— I became anxious to follow. But my kind host would not abate his attention, until, having accompanied me the whole of the road, he saw me housed, and in the midst of my shipmates. This done, he journeyed homeward, through the snow and storm of a dreary night, apparently much delighted with having had an opportunity of administering to one in distress—of being enabled to say, “He was a stranger, and I took him in.” Peace be unto him, and unto all his household! May the God and Father of all mercies smooth their declining path with many consolations, and in their last and closing trial may the Redeemer’s voice proclaim, “Come, ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” The poor tear of gratitude which now falls on my paper may never be known to you, but your reward of grace shall not fail!

When my kind benefactor had left me, I sat down as unmindful of God and his providences, as though the world existed independently of him. Nay, in no one part of that day had he been in any of my thoughts. When a young man has “lived without God and without Christ” on the shore, there is but little probability of a moral reformation at sea. In my own case I know, that from the time I first embarked, up to the period of which I am now treating, I had gradually advanced in contempt of the Almighty, and in the love and practice of sin. For a short time I felt some scruples of conscience at the horrid and prevalent vice of swearing, but

a few months entirely effaced them: and I not only joined the blasphemer without compunction, but actually considered it as the mark of a high spirit, a sort of necessary accomplishment. In addition to all this, I shortly became acquainted with some of the most vile and infamous writings that ever appeared in this kingdom. The circumstance of their being prohibited only served to enhance their value. I read them again and again, and for hours together employed myself in making extracts from them. But I have not the smallest recollection, while belonging to this ship, of ever seeing a Bible, though I once endeavoured to call to mind that sacred volume; not with the view of remembering and applying any of its sublime and awful contents to my heart, but to dress up a ludicrous account of some late adventures among the midshipmen in its peculiar language and solemn phraseology! And O how vain was I at the approbation which these wretched epistles met with from fools like myself who made a mock at sin! With what delight did I hear them say, that I had thrown in my *verily verilys*, and my *lo* and *beholds*, to much advantage! Nor did all or any of the events connected with this shipwreck, in the smallest degree awaken my mind to serious reflection or convictions of sin. Indeed, it seemed to have pleased the Almighty to give me up for a season to follow the devices and desires of my own blind and rebel heart, and thus to allow Satan to fill me with my own ways. Throughout all the perils and mercies I had passed, I had neither once implored the divine assistance, nor once returned thanks for my deliverances! No sooner had I joined my

companions at C——, than I lost sight of the difficulties I had undergone. Drunkenness, oaths, and profane songs, were in our assembly ; but none of us regarded the works of the Lord, nor considered the operations of his hands ; none inquired, Where is the Lord my deliverer and my redeemer ?

The next morning presented a melancholy spectacle, similar to what had appeared the day after our first journey. Several, who apparently had sustained no harm by their exposure to the weather, were no sooner housed beneath a warm cover, than dreadful inflammation began to seize their hands and feet, the whole limb becoming one entire blister, attended for many days with all the agony of a severe burn or scald. Several had been left in this state at the island, but a far greater number were added to the list after our second journey. I, however, escaped on both occasions entirely unhurt, and on both occasions I continued entirely unmindful of the goodness of the Lord ; demonstrating, by my conduct, that "madness is in the heart of man," and that neither mercies nor judgments are of themselves sufficient to humble, or even to check him in his sinful course.

CHAPTER V.

“IN PERILS IN THE SEA.”—2 COR. xi. 26.

THOSE “who go down to the sea in ships, and transact their business in great waters,” cannot pass many days without “*seeing* the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep.” Yet here, as on the land, the merciful interpositions of his providence are oftentimes more visible in the preservation of one man than of another. I say *more visible*; for there can be no doubt that “the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works; there can be no doubt but infinite mercy and unceasing goodness are ever in operation “to keep the harp of thousand strings in tune so long:” whether it may inhabit a tranquil cottage, or stand exposed amidst convulsive elements and contending fleets and armies. To this day “the sparrow falls not to the ground without permission:”—“He who keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps:”—“All his angels are still ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation.”

Cowper’s poor Lacemaker was as much an object of the Lord Jehovah’s superintending providence as a Nelson or a Wellington: and every single day of her life will *hereafter* appear to have been a day in which

Omnipotence preserved her from many perils; perils which she was neither permitted to see nor to feel, but which were not the smaller on that account.

If my reader be one of those whose days have passed away without furnishing any great and conspicuous providential mercies, let him not, on that account, suppose that mercy and goodness have ceased to follow him. If his journey through the troubled ocean of life has hitherto been unruffled by any great storms, let him remember, that it was only because there was One who said, "Peace, be still;" and in consequence of this command it hath hitherto proved a calm. Not so the life of the writer. The same year in which the events recorded in the former chapter took place, he was called on to share in the perils of another and more dreadful shipwreck. The spring and summer had passed away without bringing any thing extraordinary with them; but in October, when the stormy season began "to carry the mariner up to the heavens and down again to the deep," the ship he then served in was ordered to cruize off the coast of Holland, and in a week after quitting the Downs was totally wrecked on one of those numerous shoals with which that sea abounds.

The weather had generally been stormy, and accompanied with thick fogs, from the time we left port. This not a little confused our pilots; yet, humanly speaking, a very small share of common prudence might have guarded against all danger. But, alas! this vessel was a den of profaneness and blasphemy, which, during the short period she had been in commission, exhibited more of the true features of "*a hell*

a float," than any I had before seen or afterwards knew. The captain was an outrageous blasphemer, tyrant, and drunkard; and the master, whose more especial business it was to navigate the ship, was half an idiot, while the two local pilots were ignorant of their profession; most of the other officers were gentlemanly characters, but all of them detested their ship equally with the crew at large. What this vessel might have become had she floated for a few years longer, time only could show; but God would not permit the experiment to be tried, he was now about to speak in an awful warning voice to some, and in solemn judgment to others. To this end, all whose more immediate duty it was to command and to navigate the ship, seemed given up to strange infatuations. Their wisdom was turned into foolishness, and "when they said, Peace and safety, sudden destruction came upon them." The ship was lost, and more than sixty souls perished! I shall not enter into a very particular detail. Let it suffice to say, that with a strong wind blowing right on the land, and with a shore beacon-light for a considerable time in view, we ran down stem-on the coast, while our master and pilots knew not their situation, and the captain, in a state of intoxication, insisted that the light we saw was that of some ship which he would chase. Thus we proceeded until just after midnight, and while the wind blew half a gale, when thick clouds began again to darken the sky, and the angry surge was rising higher and higher, we dashed upon the fatal bank with such violence that those on deck were thrown off their feet, and those below were instantly roused from their slumbers,

to hear the doleful report, "The ship is on shore! the ship is on shore!" All was confusion and alarm; the crew were seen on deck, some half dressed, and others just as they leaped out of bed. The long-boat was hoisted out, and instantly filled, and was dashed to pieces along-side; signal-guns of distress were fired every minute; blue lights* were burnt; and measures taken to prevent the ship from falling over on her side. The chain-pumps were set to work, but our leaks defied all such resistance. The ship bilged, the sand worked through the bottom, and long before day-dawn the well was choked up, and the lower part of the vessel filled. A raft was now made with our spare top-masts and other available materials, should any means of using it be afforded. This done, nothing now remained for us to do but to wait the return of day. O how anxiously did we look towards the east, if peradventure the opening light might show some token for good! For as yet we knew not where we were, or whether any or no prospect of relief would present itself.

The anxiety with which we passed these hours of darkness, and the eager desire with which we looked forward to the day, have often since reminded me of the Psalmist's earnest longings for the manifestation of God's love to his soul. It has been the best criticism on the force and beauty of the royal mourner's words, when he exclaimed, "my soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that wait for the morning: I say, more than they that wait for the morning."

* Certain fire-works, composed of sulphur and gunpowder, which may be seen several miles at sea.

At length the sun arose, no doubt to gladden the hearts of millions, while its beams led them forth to the various pursuits of the day; but not so to us, it rather increased than diminished our sorrows.—We indeed discovered our situation, but it was a mournful discovery. The land, at seven or eight miles distance, could not be approached; and our fleet (then in possession of the Texel) was at least four miles farther off, and, under existing circumstances, utterly incapable of affording the smallest aid. The raft was launched into the water, but the sea rolled completely over it, so that this last forlorn hope was more calculated to produce despair than any thing else. Meanwhile the captain remained in his cabin in a state of idiotism and intoxication: and the lieutenants, under command of their senior brother lieutenant, stood ready to act for the best as events might enable them.

In this state of things we continued till noon, when, to our inexpressible joy, the weather in some degree moderated, and a vessel was seen standing in from sea towards us. It proved to be a King's brig: our signals of distress had been observed: she came and anchored as near as her own safety would allow. It was now extremely desirable that no time should be lost in sending a boat to concert the best and most prompt measures for our immediate relief. A consultation was held on the subject; but from the great surf which still surrounded the wreck, the commanding officer foresaw the very imminent danger which must attend those who made the attempt, and therefore very humanely forebore to issue any orders, leaving it to such as chose to volun-

teer their services. Seven seamen and three officers, including the captain of marines, had already taken their seats in the boat, when I learnt the circumstance, and instantly filled up the remaining vacant place.

All was now ready for lowering us down into the angry waves, when the commander ordered me out of the boat, and gave my situation to a stronger person. Filled with anger at being singled out, and denied what I considered as my privilege, I quitted that part of the deck, and descended below, without staying to see how the others succeeded. Here I had not indulged my sullen resentment more than five minutes, before I learnt, that the instant the boat was launched into the water, one wave of the breaking surf dashed it against the ship's side and broke all the oars, and a second completely overwhelmed them in the deep to rise no more! This intelligence stopped my murmuring, but it did not extort one sentence of thanksgiving, or lead me to see the hand of God in it! I merely thought, that as things had turned out, I was better where I then found myself!

By four o'clock the boats were enabled to pass and repass; and before dark about two hundred of the crew were taken from the wreck.

It may not be improper to observe, that, as this ship had been but newly commissioned, the officers and men were strangers to each other, and could not, and did not feel any of that personal respect for, and attachment towards each other which happily sometimes exists in our vessels of war. Hence all this desirable influence was lost to the officers, while much insubordination was ex-

hibited by the seamen generally during the whole of this melancholy event, the evils of which were severely felt; particularly when the boats, from time to time, came for more men; numbers rushing into them not only obstructed the commanding lieutenant in executing the regular duty, but even endangered their own lives, and actually prevented many more from getting away in the same time.

Not willing to add to these scenes of confusion and disorder, I kept back until night began to set in, and the weather had much changed for the worse. Two boats were now coming alongside, evidently for the last time. The remaining half of the crew, more than ever anxious to escape the dangers of another night on board the wreck, were hanging over the side, if possible, to gain a place. Few of them, indeed, could be received into two boats, yet every man hoped to be amongst those few. When I saw things in this state, I not only considered it my duty to make the attempt, in common with others, but regretted I had not done it earlier. That God, however, whose blessing I did not implore, was pleased to favour me; for, while numbers failed, I succeeded in leaping from the deck into one of them, and by that means was saved. Having reached the brig and put the men on board, I returned again in the boat to endeavour to obtain another cargo of passengers; but by the time we came thither, the night and all the harbingers of a storm had overtaken us, and so much increased the anxiety of those on board the wreck to obtain a place in this last boat, that we were afraid to approach near them, feeling certain that we should all be swamped to-

gether. Hence we obtained but five individuals, whom with much difficulty, we conveyed on board the brig, where we ourselves also continued for the present.

Those who remained on the wreck passed such a night as none can form any idea of but they who have experienced similar calamities. The sea continued to beat and break over them till nearly day-light; and though they had lashed themselves to the highest and most sheltered parts, yet many were swept away into the sea, and many were drowned in the wreck; including a party who had gained access to a rum puncheon, and who sat and deliberately drank of its contents until they were drowned on the spot. But it pleased the Lord to send a fine morning, and in the course of the succeeding day the survivors were taken from their miserable situation, and conveyed on board our fleet in the Texel.

As to the state of my mind while in the N——, it was such as I know not how to explain. It was a mixture of something like occasional morality, with much of the reprobate and blasphemous description. Having a little turn for making verses, I might be found one hour writing in a moral strain, and the next giving a loose to all manner of profaneness. The only part of my versified moral productions which I now recollect, is what I called "The Sailor's Prayer." It consisted of a few petitions to the God of the universe, to give me wisdom and courage under all the varieties of naval duty. It ran thus:—

May He who rules the boundless whole
Instruct my mind, enlarge my soul,

And teach to shape the trackless course,
 O'er distant seas, through current's force.
 In night's dark gloom, and tempest's howl,
 With steady courage arm my soul,
 Not deaf to danger, but resigned,
 Whate'er his will, in hope to find
 A helper in that solemn hour,
 When death o'er tars usurps his power.

Should sudden squalls our bark assail
 And spring a mast, or split a sail,
 May thy kind hand direct me still
 To act *my* part and do *thy* will!
 If launch'd o'erboard in stormy day,
 Thy goodness still to me display,
 As on the briny wave I float,
 To gain some friendly spar or boat.

Should lab'ring pumps employ our care,
 Far, far from me, O keep despair!
 But should thy wisdom so decree,
 That we our bark no more should free,
 As down with her I sink below,
 A better world my spirit show!

Such were the strains of my rude muse at times when conscience struggled with sensuality. But as I had not the smallest idea of Christianity, all my religious notions amounted to nothing more than pure heathen morality, as distinct from the doctrines of the Gospel as error is from truth. Little did I expect the calamities of a second shipwreck were so near at hand when I wrote the above lines.

Perhaps on examining the latter part of this production the reader will say, the Lord had put a prayer into my heart, and words into my mouth, to be brought forth in the time of approaching trouble. No, my good-

ness was like the morning cloud, and all my serious thoughts as the early dew, or the writing on the sea shore. The first wave of temptation swept them all away. I can assure him, although not more than three months could have elapsed between the writing the above prayer and my being actually called to attend the chain-pumps, until they choked and the ship was filled, yet I do not remember that I once thought of it, or offered up a single line of its petitions throughout that sad catastrophe! On the contrary, when day-light appeared, and our real situation was known, I felt a state of mind bordering on despair. The gloomy sky over our heads, the trembling wreck under our feet, and the roar of the tempestuous surf breaking around us, were but faint emblems of the agitation of my soul when I thought on death.

In the heat of battle it is not only possible, but easy to forget death, and cease to shrink; but in the cool and protracted hours of a shipwreck, where there is often nothing to engage the mind but the recollection of tried and unsuccessful labours, and the sight of unavoidable and increasing harbingers of destruction, it is not so easy to forget ourselves or a future state. With all my might I strove to shake off the terrors of a guilty conscience, but could not. In my distress I viewed the Almighty as a dreadful being: and could I have sunk into a state of nothingness, I should have preferred it to living in his presence. I did not love him; I did not think I had any claim or pretensions to his favour; and I could not but wish to escape his wrath.

At length the fear of that God, whom I could neither

forget nor escape, compelled me to open my mouth; but it was not with those of old to say, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!" "What shall I do to be saved?" or "Lord! what wilt thou have me to do?" No! but it was to insult the Majesty of heaven with a string of proposals and promises; how, on my part, I would in future live and act, if He, on his part, would save me from my present danger!! Gracious God! why did the waves spare me, thus to add one sin and presumption to another! When thy merciful ear heard me protesting against a course of life, of which I no further disapproved than as I feared it might expose me to thy just anger, why didst thou not doom me to that "hell which is moved from beneath to meet the sinner at his coming?"

Precious and adorable Intercessor! It was thy plea, thy presence at the right hand of Power, which prevailed to the averting of that judgment, which otherwise must have been poured out in full vials of wrath on one whose prayers were a very abomination in the sight of thine offended Father!—"The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked!" Yes! let pride and ignorance write or say ever so much to the contrary, I have nothing more to do than to examine what my own is, and what it has been; and all their vain janglings fall to the ground. What else could induce me, the instant I was clear of the wreck, to forget all my vows and proposals, and to sing, with others,

"Where's the tempest now? who feels it?"

All our cares are drown'd in wine!"

And yet so far was this my conduct from being considered an outrage against morality and good order by my superiors, that they absolutely showed me much marked attention, and considered me "*a very worthy young man!*" I mention this, lest any advocate for the purity and dignity of human nature should say that I was so notoriously reprobate beyond others, as to be no fair specimen of the descendants of Adam. On the other hand, that my goodness did not make me "meet to receive or deserve grace of congruity,"* will still appear from the sequel of my narrative.†

* Art. XIII. Of Works before Justification.

† Should the reader's curiosity ask what became of these officers, to whose ignorance and misconduct the loss of this ship must ever be attributed? I reply, the master was reduced in the list of the navy, and the captain was broke, and rendered incapable of ever serving again.

CHAPTER VI.

“THOU HAST MADE ME TO SERVE WITH THY SINS,
THOU HAST WEARIED ME WITH THINE INIQUITIES.”

ISAIAH xliiii. 24.

YES, most gracious God! I plead guilty to this thy charge; I acknowledge my rebellion; I know I have walked in a way that was not good; I have walked after my own thoughts, and provoked thee to anger continually to thy face. O that I may henceforth live under the abiding and increasing sense of thy long forbearance and tender compassion, and never, never grieve thy blessed Spirit more! Surely, were I in hell itself, I must proclaim thee in thine own words; and while evil spirits vented their execrations, methinks I must often cease from my weeping and wailing to say, Nay, for “He is Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.” And now, such of my readers as are disposed to see this character of a covenant God further exemplified in the life of an unworthy fellow-sinner, must follow me from the German Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. As yet I had never been afflicted with any dangerous illness; at least I was too young and thoughtless to consider the small-pox, measles, and a typhus fever as such, when I

passed through them. But soon after the E——, my next ship, arrived in those seas, the garrison of Genoa, then in possession of the French army, being starved out, was obliged to capitulate. This event threw several hundreds of the half-famished soldiers into our hands, when a sudden change from starvation to good living produced several deaths among them, and introduced a pestilential fever among ourselves. Our ship was, in consequence, obliged to repair to Minorca; the sick were put on shore for refreshment, and five of the most desperate cases, including myself, were left at the hospital. From the hour of quitting the dreary wreck of the N——, to that in which I was left at sick quarters, and became perfectly delirious, I had never employed my reason or my thoughts on the subject of my vows and proposals of leading a better life. Three years had elapsed since I rushed from the means of grace on shore; and, up to this period, I had never read one sentence of the word of God. I had gone, like Pharaoh, from one degree of hardened rebellion to another, until the presence of the Lord seemed to be withdrawn, and Satan permitted almost to reign the undisturbed possessor of my heart. No remorse of conscience, no desires to do better, no remembrance of former mercies, had for some time past, found place within me. Gracious God! why was I not hurried from the ravages of a burning fever into those of a burning hell! Only because thou art God, and not man!

This foreign hospital was a place where, as far as I can remember, no man seemed to care for his own soul, much less for that of his fellow. Here were no chris-

tian visitors either to instruct the ignorant and dying, to cheer the drooping spirits of the contrite, (should such be there,) or to speak a word of alarm to the hardened impenitent. Had one such entered my apartment, and known but so much of my history as has already been brought forward, what must his feelings have been! From attending a little while to my incoherent ravings, he would have turned aside to weep, and to say, "Alas, my brother!" Perhaps he would have soliloquized over my couch, and asked, "Is this indeed ——? he who all his life long has received mercies only to abuse them? O ——! where are now thy profane jests, thy songs, thy oaths? where thy friends and companions in sin and folly, thy dreams of honour, thy desires of renown? Behold thy life is drawing to its close; thy mind is already as good as dead; one only of thy companions in sickness remains, but thou art unconscious of all! Thou regardest not him who is living, nor those who are committed to their graves. Alas, my brother! may that God whose power is almighty, and whose mercy is a great deep, be more merciful to thee than men dare aspire to hope." Indeed, charity itself, which continually hopeth all possible things, and rejoiceth in that hope, could hardly have expected that I should be spared to add yet a numerous train of offences to the already dark catalogue. But the "Lord's ways are not as our ways, neither are his thoughts as our thoughts."

At the end of ten or twelve days, when my reason returned, I had then just strength sufficient to cast my eyes round the ward, to enquire after my companions,

to hear of their death, and to view my own poor emaciated frame. All I saw and heard only distressed me; I thought it impossible I could recover; and again the subjects of death and judgment seized upon my mind in a way not to be shaken off. The still quiet of a hospital was favourable to meditation. Here no turbulent sea scenes intruded to prevent reflection, or to divert the mind from its object. My thoughts might, therefore, be considered as more regular and settled than they ever yet had been. The reader may here see what were the hopes and fears of one, who, on a bed of sickness, and in the prospect of death, knew not the only true God, nor Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. And O! that some poor deluded mortal may, in the review of my case, be led to see a picture of his own, and to fly to that Saviour, of whom I knew nothing at the period I now allude to! For it is but too true, that many in every parish, in every ship, and in every grade and rank of society, are in much the same condition. At least I have been surprised and distressed at the numbers I have, since that period, become acquainted with, whose views and hopes have been an exact counterpart of these my own. Although I was totally ignorant of the system or plan of salvation by grace through faith in a crucified Redeemer, I still remembered and believed certain doctrines and historical facts of the Bible: such as that there was a heaven and a hell; that after death came the judgment; and that the dead would be judged according to the things written in the books concerning them; that God created and had once destroyed the world; that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, and suffered death at the

hands of the Jews, &c. But these doctrines and facts brought no consolation, I still conceived of the Almighty as a being unamiable, austere, and full of terror. I saw nothing, I knew nothing of him as a God who delighteth in mercy. I felt no desire after heaven for its own sake; for I knew nothing of its nature, as revealed in Scripture; nor had I the smallest conception of that meekness or preparation of soul which is essential towards its enjoyment. All I can say is, that some vague notions floated in my mind of its inhabitants being happy. But such were my low ideas of their felicity, that my desires to join them were, not that I should be filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory in their company, but that I should be secure from the punishments of hell, if I once obtained an entrance into heaven. The point and centre of all my anxiety was this: how I might make out a case that would pass the dread examination, and secure me from the wrath to come. Though my conscience was too callous to charge me with any heinous sins, yet, on the whole, I thought God was angry with me, and that I had not been good enough to be esteemed one of his favourites; for I considered that all who went to heaven were admitted thither in consequence of their having deserved it, and that they had, by their own meritorious deeds, made themselves favourites with the Lord Almighty. I could not, I say, rank myself among these, yet I never lost sight of what I had first conceived the necessity of doing, namely, that of making out my case as fair as possible. To this end I looked within and without, to muster together all the good, or rather supposed good things I could, if

happily they might become more than a counterpoise to my bad deeds. Little, indeed, could I find to approve of, though I strove hard in the work, dissembling and cloaking my sins from myself, as though the Searcher of hearts would overlook what I endeavoured to conceal; as though the sentiments of my Judge must necessarily run parallel with my own; and that if I could but bring myself in *not guilty*, he would confirm the sentence. But this, of course, was utter childishness, and ignorance of the Scriptures, such as, thank God, every boy and girl now in my Sabbath school would smile at; but it was the best I then knew of those important things that are to guide us to an eternal world of happiness or misery. O, lamentable ignorance! melancholy delusion! fruitless labour! From my soul I do now pity that man and woman, who, in the prospect of death, lies deep in thought, in fixed and serious thoughts of another world, and are thus vainly labouring to comfort themselves, since nothing but present wretchedness and future misery can be the result. When I had thus foolishly laboured, as it were, in the fire, to compose my mind, and had sometimes almost succeeded in deceiving myself, suddenly my fears would rekindle, and again fill my soul with all the anxiety, arising from the suggestion: "What if all your good deeds, when weighed in the balance, should be found wanting!"

In a few days I borrowed a Prayer-book, and turning from page to page, read as for hire, and thought I thereby made myself better. But all was comfortless work; my eyes ached, my hands trembled, but my anxiety was not relieved. At length I came to the Visitation Ser-

vice and Prayers for the Sick and Dying: and never did poor superstitious monk work through his beads with more labour and ignorance than I did through these evangelical prayers. Yet not a sentence broke on my mind to give the smallest light of the Gospel method of salvation. "Wash his soul, we pray thee, in the blood of that immaculate Lamb that was slain to take away the sins of the world," &c., with other petitions of a similar nature, were read over and over again without my discovering the least knowledge of, or being in any way struck with the important doctrine contained in them. Not once did I ask, whether *my* soul were washed in that blood; not once did I enquire why it needed to be washed. The fact is, I had not the smallest conception either of the thing itself, or of the necessity of a personal interest in it. All my hopes rested on my own worthiness: all my disquietude arose from the fear of punishment, not from a hatred of sin, or a sense of the much abused mercy of a good and gracious God. And no sooner did my strength begin to return, than my terrors and my readings were gradually lost sight of; until at the end of one month, I rejoined the ship as ignorant of myself and divine things as when I left her, though, perhaps, with somewhat more of a tender conscience and teachableness of mind.

But the time drew near when a ray of light was to dawn on a benighted soul. My friend, Captain W——, was blessed with a pious daughter, who, on the father's quitting home to command this ship, had put up Burders Village Sermons in his trunk, with the hope, and no doubt with the prayer, that they might not go forth

in vain. That hope, as it respected the poor thoughtless father, was not realized. I knew him well: I saw him die. He quitted this world in much the same state as many thousands of our more decent characters depart, ignorant of his own heart and of the spirituality of the divine law. There were no bonds, neither were there any hopes in his death. But, although these little volumes lay unread by him for whom they were principally intended, the good providence of God directed them to me, and commissioned them to dispel a portion of mental darkness, and to show me "that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life!" The sermon on the conversion of the Philippian Jailor, Acts xvi. 30, 31. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" and they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," was the first discourse that ever broke on my mind so as to impart one distinct and scriptural ray of the plan of salvation. Amazed and confounded at my former ignorance, I felt some thankfulness that the Lord had not called me hence in my former heathen creed; for I now saw that there must be a peace-maker to stand between offending man and an offended God. Yet there was a strange veil still over my eyes. For, notwithstanding I read the two volumes attentively, and also turned often to the Bible, I continued ignorant of many essential truths. The natural and universal depravity of the human heart, the necessity of regeneration, and the insufficiency of man to will or perform any thing truly good of himself, were doctrines I saw no more of than a heathen;

and as to the offices and work of the Holy Ghost, as a convincing, comforting, teaching, and sanctifying Spirit, I might be truly said not to know any thing of the matter. Confused and limited as my knowledge of the christian system was, I soon became proud of it, and even considered it as that faith spoken of in the Scriptures, and treated of in the sermons I had read. But, alas, as this was only a small accession of scriptural information, it did not purify my heart, or work by love. Indeed, with the exception of having left off swearing, and ridiculing of religion, my practice was much the same as before; and, as conscience did its work a little more faithfully, my life was only more wretched. Sinning, and vowing against committing sin, repenting and transgressing, and transgressing and repenting, made up the round of most of my days and months during the three years I was abroad. My companions often thought me happy; I knew myself to be miserable. During this period many visible providential mercies fell to my lot. Our ship was twice nearly set on fire, and on both occasions I was greatly instrumental in overcoming this most awful of all maritime calamities. Nay, in the last instance, I was the sole and timely instrument. It was on a Sunday. We were lying in Malta harbour; and as almost all the officers and crew were either on shore or upon the upper deck I had embraced the opportunity of sitting down to read the Bible: and being near the spot where the fire burst out, I was enabled, though almost at the expense of suffocation, to throw a quantity of water on it, and to extinguish what, in five minutes, would have so filled the lower part of the ship with

smoke, and have so extended itself, as to baffle human efforts. As it was, the danger was past by the time the alarmed crew began to descend with a view of combating it. Thrice after my return from the hospital, our people were visited with pestilential diseases which proved fatal to many, and more than once or twice we narrowly escaped shipwreck; besides sharing in all the vicissitudes of seasons and services mentioned in "Collins's Voyages to Portugal, Spain, Sicily, Malta, Asia Minor, Egypt, &c. &c." as our ship was frequently in company with the *Dolphin*, employed in the same branch of service, visited most of the places, and shared in the same perils, which are related of that vessel during the last three years of her continuance in those seas.*

Had I been blessed with a serious friend, I might, through divine mercy, have become more decidedly a Christian; but such a privilege I as yet had never enjoyed. On the contrary, my messmates, and every officer in the ship, were not only ignorant of God, but seemingly vied with each other in sin. When I could get on shore alone, I generally fell into a reflecting mood, and often enjoyed a solitary ramble on the banks of the Nile, or the shores of Cyprus and ancient Crete, and felt desirous of hearing what these places once heard, and of seeing what their inhabitants once saw. But the first hour that returned me to my companions drove all these thoughts away. The superb magnificence and solemn state of the Roman Catholic churches

* The pious author of these *Voyages* is now dead; but I gladly embrace this opportunity of recommending his little book as an interesting christian narrative of facts.

struck me with awe. Though I felt certain they were the temples of corrupt and superstitious worshippers, yet I fell into a pleasing melancholy, whenever I could pace their aisles undisturbed and unseen. But I think the worshippers of the impostor Mahomet struck my vain mind with more solemnity than any other people. Proud as I was of my better creed, yet their practice put me to the blush, whenever I saw them prostrate on the earth, absorbed in their devotions, and utterly regardless of the eyes and the opinions of others. Many, indeed, were the striking objects which at different times and places continued to present themselves to the eye, as well as to the mind, during our long and roving services in the Mediterranean. For the christian and classic reader is well aware that we could scarcely pass the shores of any country, or approach the shelter of any harbour, whose present or past history did not powerfully admonish us to consider the instability of all earthly things. On many of these occasions the Spirit of the Lord certainly strove with me, although I knew it not at the time.—Yes; it was undoubtedly that unknown still small voice, which sometimes made me thus converse with myself: Where is the ancient wisdom, and where all the once boasted greatness of Egypt? Where the splendour of its Alexandria, the pomp and luxury of its Canopus, and the glory of its Pharaohs? Where is Tyre, and where is Carthage? Where the seven churches planted by the apostles? Where the pure knowledge and holy practice they once inculcated? Gone—some few broken fragments of the one, and some few eclipsed remains of the other, are indeed to be found;

but their glory is departed, and their very remembrance is likely to perish from off the earth!"

But Sicily and its volcano, its ruins and its neighbouring coast, displayed too much of the grand operations of nature, and of the awful visitations of God, to pass unnoticed even by a more thoughtless being than myself.

It was impossible to stand on the shores of Messina without feeling some awe in the contemplation of surrounding objects. If the eye turned southward, it beheld the towering summit of Mount *Ætna*, pouring forth its clouds of smoke, and occasionally emitting the vivid flame; and when it retired to survey nearer objects, it saw in many places little else than melancholy ruins of what had once been the habitations of men, the chambers in which the tabret and the pipe, the viol and the harp had sounded—the ruins of whole ranges of buildings, whose lofty tops many years ago caught and reflected the first rays of that day's sun, who before he went down saw the convulsive earthquake hurl them into their present forlorn and prostrate state, beheld the sea cast its waves on the unresisting shore, and sweep its crowded and despairing people into one common grave.

My then confused and scanty knowledge of the human heart will account for my surprise and perplexity, when, standing by these ruins, thoughtful and distressed, I saw the natives pass and repass, utterly unmindful of the scenes which so much engaged my attention. Surely, I said to myself, these people are stupid and hardened in the extreme, who can every day behold yonder vol-

cano, and every day live in the very midst of these ruins, and yet every day take the lead in all manner of sin!

Alas! poor moralizer! thou couldst see the mote in thy brother's eye, but thou didst not discern the beam in thine own; otherwise thou wouldest have ceased to marvel at the Sicilian's indifference, and have asked thyself how it was that these reflections on God and his judgments could vanish from thine own mind the instant the objects which gave rise to them were withdrawn from thy sight!

What greatly assisted to dissipate serious reflections from my mind was the several active duties I generally had to perform, and in the bustle of which I took so much delight; especially, as I was for the last two years we were abroad directed by the captain to do lieutenant's duty both at sea and in port. This was undoubtedly a great help towards increasing my professional knowledge, but it made me very vain and worldly-minded.

While I pass over many occurrences in silence, there is one which I cannot but notice; it took place a few weeks after my becoming acquainted with the Village Sermons. Sitting alone, and, for the first time, reading the Pilgrim's Progress, I felt much interested; and though I understood but little of its spiritual import, I made a general application of it to myself. I considered life as a journey, beset with innumerable dangers, and myself as a traveller surrounded by so many and great difficulties, that I deemed it almost impossible but I must one day fall under them, and never reach the celestial city. It was no trifling season. I closed the

book, and for the first time in my life wept over myself as a sinner exposed to much spiritual evil and many peculiar snares. Then it was I experienced what some may condemn as enthusiasm, but what I at this day humbly hope was the still small voice of God.* While weeping over my forlorn condition, these words, "*I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,*" were impressed on my mind with such a distinctness and power, that, had a voice pronounced them, they could not have been received more distinctly. I had then never seen or read them to my knowledge, but from that instant I felt confident they were a part of Holy Writ, and conceived some hopes of their being sent as an assurance of the Lord's mercy and goodness to me. And will the Almighty never leave, never forsake *me*? I said to myself. The thought filled my eyes and my heart, as they had never been filled before, and as I cannot describe to others.—But O what a base ungrateful wretch did I soon prove!—The world and its honours—the flesh and its lusts—the devil and his wiles, shortly united to quench this ray of the Spirit; and they but too well succeeded! On our voyage home I could not forget that more than six years had elapsed since I turned my back on the Lord's house, and all the mercies of a quiet family. And I knew also, that often during the last two years of our abode in the Mediterranean, I had pleased myself with the thought of attending his courts if I lived to return. But when that event really took place, and some favorable opportunities did offer, I neglected them all, gave myself to the service of Satan, and polluted the Lord's Sabbaths, seeking my own pleasure,

and doing my own will. Such was the state of things when the E——— was put out of commission, and I joined the D———, to offend still more, and to receive yet greater mercies.

CHAPTER VII.

"GOD SPEAKETH ONCE, YEA TWICE, YET MAN PERCEIVETH IT NOT."—JOB xxxiii. 14.

ALAS! poor sinful, wretched, rebel man! Little does it avail that some pronounce great things in thy praise; little does it change the nature of things, though they "spend all their powers of rant and rhapsody" in eulogies of moral rectitude! "All is but the tinkling cymbal and high-sounding brass; smitten in vain!" For thy Maker's voice is disregarded. He who formed thee from the womb, proclaims, "Although the ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib, Israel does not know, his people do not consider." They consider neither his calls of mercy nor his voice of judgment, but are ever disposed "to revolt more and more, seeing the whole head is sick, the whole heart faint."

Do any of my readers doubt this Bible statement? Let them look abroad; let them "examine themselves truly;" or let them peruse these brief memorials of a stranger; and the result will be, a conviction that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

It was in May, 1803, when we returned to England. The short peace of Amiens had then expired, and war again sounded the alarm, and we were instantly directed

to prepare to face our enemies, when we had been calculating on returning to our friends. As *honour* and *glory*, falsely so called, were then my idols, I rather rejoiced at this circumstance; and especially so when I obtained a situation under one of our very influential and first-rate officers. Most striking were the leadings of Providence in bringing me under this officer's command and patronage, although, at that time, I saw but little of the hand of God in them. Indeed, the world was now so completely my object, that, notwithstanding the tender mercies of a heavenly Father had watched over and returned me in health to my "long lost native shore," he was seldom in my thoughts: I reflected not on the thousands who once sailed with me, but whose carcasses had fallen in distant lands, or been ingulfed in the ocean, while I had been preserved. Nay, when his gracious providence had again prospered my way, and given me a few opportunities of attending his house of prayer, I not only neglected to embrace them, but, as was observed in the conclusion of the last chapter, I devoted these seasons to the service of Satan, and polluted his Sabbaths by seeking my own pleasure, and doing my own will. In the D—— I found a large and gay society of young men, whose only object, like my own, was to obtain "that honour which cometh from man;" and happy and enviable was his lot esteemed who outstripped his competitors in the ardent race. The world caressed me, and I gave it my heart. My practice as a Christian became more lax: I gave way to furious angry passion: sought my happiness in the smiles of man; and more and more forgot God. Who, then, will be

surprised to hear, that my little scriptural light became darkness; or, that on my having grieved and quenched the blessed Spirit, Satan should be again permitted to exert great power over me! I shudder at the recollection of this period! Merciful God; well might thy blessed Son declare that the things which are highly esteemed among men are abomination to thee—in my own case I know it must have been so.*

Such was the determined manner in which I went through all the boisterous duties of my station, that I was appointed to head a party of the boarders in time of action, and also to command a company of men selected to combat and extinguish fire whenever it might occur in the ship. In short, I left my companions at a dis-

* The writer wishes it to be clearly understood, that no part of his own irregularity could be ascribed to the want of good order and discipline on board this ship. Captain H— (who lately departed this life a titled admiral, and justly honoured by his sovereign) was too good an officer, and too moral a man, to suffer any to trifle in his presence, either with their public duties, or the sacred name and things of God. Wherever he conceived that he found merit, there he promoted it to the utmost of his power; and if his ship had not a pious chaplain on board, it was not his fault. He watched over the conduct of those young men more immediately under his care, with the vigilant eye of an intelligent father; and formed the character and sent forth not a few who at this day are officers high in rank and respectability in the service. Had all commanders of his Majesty's ships and vessels of war been like him, perhaps the writer would this day have been very differently employed to what he now is: but be that as it may, so long as reason and memory maintain their empire, so long will the name and remembrance of Sir G. H. be honoured and respected by him.

tance, carried all before me, and was among the very first who received promotion from the commander-in-chief after the close of the battle of Trafalgar, in which the D—— took no minor part.

Ours being one of the only three ships which saved and carried into port their captured enemies, I was sent on board the ship that struck to us to assist in taking her to Gibraltar, where we had scarcely arrived, before the D—— came in, and my kind captain put into my hands a lieutenant's commission from Lord Collingwood, and a purse of doubloons as my share of some prizes lately captured; then wishing me all future good success, he left me to repair on board the C——r, to which ship I was appointed.

Thus did the world, or rather the providence of God smile upon me; men applauded my conduct, but I am sure that God condemned it. He was not as yet in ail or any of my thoughts as the chief good; the glory of his name was not my motive of action; nor was his word my rule of conduct. But amidst all the dangers and mercies, the bustle and delusive smiles with which I was surrounded, I was far from being happy, either before or after my promotion. The Lord did not suffer my conscience to become wholly callous, and every day I did more than sufficient to wound its feelings and raise its voice. Nothing short of the preventing mercies of God kept me from destroying myself and others in my paroxysms of anger and passion. Once I so nearly brought on an apoplectic fit, as to turn giddy, become speechless, stagger, and almost fall on the deck; and often has this unworthy hand levelled a poor offending

fellow-mortal at my feet on a trifling occasion. No marvel then, that, when I retreated to my cabin, I was wretched in the review of my conduct.

Turning back again to the time previous to the battle of Trafalgar, and while I was serving in the D——, I must now observe that the enemy assaulted me with the weapons of deism; doubts upon doubts, and one cavil after another, rushed on the mind, and induced me to call the whole authority of Scripture in question. Did the eternal Author of all being, indeed, give his only begotten Son to be the propitiation for sinners? was a question frequently suggested to my mind. I left off reading the Bible, and reasoned after the wisdom of man. Viewing the universe through the medium of recent astronomical discoveries, I beheld systems of worlds rising above each other in an innumerable multitude, and almost lost sight of our globe, as an atom in the vast field of creation. My belief was staggered at the price said to have been paid for the redemption of this atom, and I foolishly asked, what or who must redeem the millions of others?* The sight of the rainbow was, for some months, the constant introduction to these sceptical reasonings: in it I conceived I had found out an undeniable instance of priestcraft, merely because I could describe how natural causes produce that beautiful effect.† O Scepticism! thou destroyer of man's peace,

* In the fifth chapter of Fuller's "Gospel its own Witness," there is an admirable answer to this objection.

† Whether during the age of the ante-diluvian world rain descended in its present usual form of showers, or whether the whole face of the ground continued to be watered by a mist going

thy chain, I can say from experience, is hard to be borne. *No part of my life was more truly unhappy than this, in which I called in question the authority of revelation.* I dreaded my own sentiments, yet continued to indulge them. I trembled at my creed, though I tried to hold it fast. Strange and miserable infatuation! Happy for me, no disciples of modern infidelity, nor any of their pernicious works, had yet fallen in my way, or I should probably have declared at once for the doctrines of Paine's Age of reason, &c. Since that time

up from it, as specified in Genesis ii. 6. and consequently, whether the bow did or did not appear before the flood, is not worth our staying to conjecture or enquire. One thing is clear to the intelligent mind, that the colours are the natural effect of a well-known cause, and as such the bow contains no more of the finger of God than any other portion of his works. But in the then pride and ignorance of my heart, I did not once ask who established and gave laws to nature; nor did I once reflect on the divine condescension, thus stooping to give a promise of safety to offending men, and ratifying this promise anew whenever they behold this seal or natural sign in the cloud. Had it pleased the Lord to appoint any other part of his natural and visible works (for instance, every new or full moon, or every eclipse) as a remembrancer of the deluge, and of our safety from its recurrence, his goodness would have been equally conspicuous, though the sign itself would not have been so appropriate, so striking to the outward senses, as that of the glowing bow; because it is only when the sky is darkened with storms, and the torrents are descending to moisten, but not to destroy the earth, that this gracious and beautiful token appears. What time, then so appropriate—what part of all nature's productions so suited to confirm a merciful promise that the earth shall no more be destroyed by a flood? O! the wisdom and goodness of God, in giving the promise, and in selecting such a memorial of its continuance!

I have read some of their vain philosophy, their proud and blasphemous reasonings, and have been much struck at the similarity of their cavils and my own. Nay, I have seen their objections clothed in the very shape in which Satan formerly suggested them to my mind; and hence I knew who had taught them. May the Lord change their hearts, and preserve all mankind from their destructive opinions and principles.

“Ah me! the laurell’d wreath that murder rears,
 Blood-nurs’d and water’d by the widow’s tears,
 Seems not so foul, so tainted, and so dread,
 As waves the night-shade round the sceptic’s head.
 What is the bigot’s torch, the tyrant’s chain?
 I smile at death, if heaven-born hope remain!
 But if the warring winds of nature’s strife
 Be all the faithless charter of my life;
 If *chance* awaked, inexorable power,
 This frail and feverish being of an hour;
 Doom’d o’er the world’s precarious scene to sweep,
 Swift as the tempest travels on the deep,
 To know delight but by her parting smile,
 And toil and wish, and weep a little while;
 Then melt, ye elements, that form’d in vain,
 This troubled pulse and visionary brain!
 Fade, ye wild flowers, memorials of my doom,
 And sink, ye stars, that light me to the tomb!”

CAMPBELL.

But blessed be God, things are not so. There is a Gospel of peace given unto man; and in its hallowed pages life and immortality are brought to light. O blessed Bible! may thy doctrines and promises continue to cheer and support me and all the believing servants

of God through this vale of tears ; for I know by experience, that the Assyrians, the Jarebs of this world, cannot heal a troubled mind, nor cure a wounded spirit.

During this period of scepticism, I remember being one evening below, and more than usually struck with dread at the thought of such consequences as must follow a denial of the Bible, should it, after all, prove to be the revealed will of God. In this perplexity and distress I knelt down by the side of a cannon which occupied one side of my cabin, and exclaimed, "Lord, show me whether the Bible is truth or falsehood;" and once more I had words suggested to my mind with as much power and distinctness, as those recorded in the former chapter ; but assuredly from a different source. The former I then believed, and still do believe, were from the Spirit of God, encouraging me to hope and persevere in christian duty ; while this was evidently from the spirit of evil to distress and perplex me. The words now suggested were these, "What a fool you are to suppose that the Almighty will regard such a request, or attend to anything you say."

Whatever the reader may think, I can assure him that the force with which these words were suggested to or impressed on the mind, was such as I shall never forget, and such as at that moment actually startled and induced me to rise from my knees, and say, "Yes, it is indeed gross folly for me to encourage any such thought as that the Almighty will either attend to or regard me." I then went on deck, and for a considerable time endeavoured to forget the subject of the Scriptures altogether.

To the best of my recollection, this sceptical state of mind lasted about half a year, when I gradually returned to reading the Bible (if it may be called reading;) for no sooner had the Lord driven Satan from this post, than he attacked me from another. No longer able to make me deny the Scriptures, he endeavoured to prevent my reading them, and this he did by injecting the most vile and horrid, the most impure and abominable thoughts into my mind whenever I opened that blessed book. It is utterly impossible that a second person can conceive to what length this perplexing snare was carried. Many a time did I shut up the Bible, as the only way of getting clear of what made me detest myself; for I found, that whenever I left off reading, I was delivered from these abominable thoughts. So little did I know of Satan's devices, of my own heart, or of the way to escape the evils of the one or the other. While these conflicts were passing within my mind, and while I was sinning on deck and repenting below, making resolutions, and breaking them faster and faster, the Lord sent me one very striking personal call to turn and consider the madness of my ways.

Having anchored off the coast of Suffolk, a party went on shore to shoot wild fowl. We had returned to the beach, and were waiting the arrival of the boat. The roar of noisy mirth had ceased, and I was at length become thoughtful; for I had greatly sinned against light and conscience that day. As I was pacing the shore, thirty or forty yards from the main body of my companions, one of them levelled his piece; I noticed him, and thought his aim was well adjusted for my head,

if he had any real design to shoot me. Scarcely had the thought crossed my mind before he fired: when, feeling my hat jerk, I took it off, and to my surprise, found the contents of his piece had entered the crown, right in front; passed over the scalp of the head, and escaped through the back part of the hat! It appeared, on inquiry that he had loaded with a pebble-stone, the size of a musket-ball, which he foolishly supposed would fly to dust as soon as it escaped the barrel of the piece. When I saw how near I had been to the eternal world, I could not but say, "This is surely the voice of God;" and under this impression I sat silent in the boat during the greater part of our way to the ship, a circumstance which one of the lieutenants observed, and began to rally me on it, asking whether the thought of having been nearly shot had tied up my tongue? And now, does the reader imagine I honestly confessed the truth?—No! for, although I trembled at the recollection of the eye and hand of Omnipotence being so evidently about me, yet I trembled more at the prospect of human ridicule, and rather than endure the laugh of man for standing in awe of God, I ventured on another act of known sin, and positively denied that any such thought occupied my mind.

Such was my base ingratitude to a gracious Preserver, who still permitted me to live, an awful instance of this truth, that though "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not;" at least not so as to be duly affected by the divine calls. But my heinous lie left a sting behind, which more than ever banished peace from my mind. I applied to the Bible with somewhat more

attention than usual; but, alas! it was a sealed book, Egyptian darkness overshadowed my understanding, and fretfulness and dissatisfaction (not repentance) filled my heart. Still I put on the hypocritical smile of cheerfulness in company, and passed for a happy fellow, while happiness was an entire stranger to my breast. My most comfortable hours were those in which the bustle and exertion of nautical duty prevented my thinking. In this state I passed more than two years in the D——, causing the Lord to serve with my sins, and wearying him with my iniquities; until I concluded my services in that ship at the battle of Trafalgar, and was promoted into the C——r, as has been already mentioned.

I might lengthen out my remarks on his goodness, in covering my head in that day of battle, when so many fell; as well as, on three different occasions, preserving this ship from the most imminent danger of being wrecked, on the coast of Spain, and in the North Sea; but I refrain from doing it, lest so many repetitions should exhaust the patience of my readers. I will only observe, that some time after I left the D——, this dear favourite ship was lost, and more than five hundred souls perished with her! O that I could but feel as I ought to do in the retrospective view of so much mercy! But, alas! like David, I find my soul cleaves to the dust; and, like St. Paul, when I would do good—when I would “stretch forth the wings of love and arms of faith,” evil in various shapes is present with me, and shortly I am found dwelling in the tents of Kedar as before.

CHAPTER VIII.—

“I WILL SING OF MERCY AND JUDGMENT.”—PSALM ci. 1.

SWEET theme! thou hast smoothened down many a rugged portion of my way through this wilderness of sin—thou hast solaced me through many a past and gloomy hour! Henceforth, “when clouds and darkness are round about the throne of the Almighty,” may I ever remember, that “mercy and truth are the habitation of his seat.” When at any time “I walk in darkness, and have no light,” let the remembrance of past goodness cheer my drooping spirits, and strengthen my feeble knees! And, O thou gracious covenant God! who hast borne with me so long, do thou bear with me a little longer, and from henceforth, enable me to follow thy dear Son as the good shepherd, although it be like the ewes big with young, limping, and in the rear of thy flock! Whensoever I am likely to faint, do thou stretch forth thy merciful hand, and enable me to endure unto the end, to arrive at thy fold, and to awake up after thy likeness; for then I shall indeed be satisfied with it—then shall “hosannahs no more languish on the tongue,” nor will my devotions die away into lukewarmness; but on the contrary,

“This song shall last when night has quenched the pole,
And heav’n is all departed as a scroll;

Yea, when, as Justice has long since decreed,
This earth shall blaze, and a new world succeed."

still shall I sing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, I shall sing.

On returning to England, the C—— had to undergo some repairs, which enabled me to be more on shore than formerly. Again I mixed with gay companions, turned my back on the house of God, and sought, in the midst of thoughtless beings, like myself, that happiness which had hitherto eluded my grasp. I sought it eagerly, but I found it not. The sound of the church-going bell, the procession to and from different places of worship, and that solemn something which pervades the Sabbath, and which all the abandoned profligacy of the multitude cannot entirely do away; these united in dashing the cup of pleasure from my lips, and in establishing the dominion of conscience within: but the fear of man was my great, my dreadful snare. Like Agrippa, I was almost persuaded to reform, and become a Christian, but the dread of ridicule was like a triple chain about me. Well said the poet,

" He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside."

How lamentably did I continue to labour as a bond-slave in the drudgery of this chain, doing the works of Satan! Not because I felt his service to be freedom, or his paths to be those of peace; but that I dreaded the trial of cruel mockings, should I quit his ranks. Thus I went on, one hour reflecting and condemning myself, the next gallanting ladies to shops and morning visits,

sitting down to wine parties, or mixing in the card-room, the assembly, or the ball. Twice I, as it were, stole away from them, and attended the morning service at a fashionable chapel of ease; but I neither understood nor felt what I heard. Little, indeed, did I then know of doctrines, but I was vexed to find nothing about Christ, nothing to rouse the mind, or warm the soul, in these well-trimmed, cold, and heartless discourses. The next Sabbath I rambled into the fields, and stumbled, as the world would say, by mere chance on Old Stoke church, just as the congregation were going in. I followed them, and saw, and heard, and felt, what I little expected. To hear a minister address his audience, not from the pages of a formal, cold, moral essay, but from a page of notes laid in his Bible, with that seriousness, which bespoke him really in earnest—and with that affection, which showed that he indeed felt for their eternal peace: to hear and witness all this in a Minister of the Established Church, was to me (pardon me, my clerical reader) as new as it was unexpected: nor was the subject matter less new than the manner in which it was delivered. I may truly say by this servant of Christ, as the Athenians did by the great Apostle, “He brought strange things to my ears,” while he continued to draw the picture of man as a helpless undone creature, possessing a nature totally corrupt and desperately wicked. I now began to discover the source of that evil which I so often had found breaking through all the restraints, the resolutions, and vows with which I had endeavoured to bind it. Hitherto I had esteemed myself capable of doing great things; nor had all my failures swept away

my vain conceits of a good heart and inherent strength. But now the Word was commissioned to lay the axe at the root of all such vain imaginations. I was told, and I felt, that I could neither think nor act for myself in any way pleasing to God, but that all my sufficiency must be derived from above. In short, a few more sermons tore away all my false props from under me, and I saw myself "poor, and blind, and wretched, and miserable, and naked." But I was not left here. I was directed to the Lord Jesus as the great High Priest, whose fulness abounds to the supplying of all the wants of his church and people. What a display of those wants, and of the mercy and goodness of a covenant God to supply them, did I hear, in an enlargement on Psalm lv. 22. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." No longer surprised at my having formerly broken through so many resolutions and vows of amendment, I stood amazed at the folly of having even made one in my own strength. I now understood, both doctrinally and experimentally, that "it is not our willing or running, but that it is of God, who showeth mercy, and who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Our ship, happily, continued for a while on the Channel service; and occasionally went into this port; and I as often embraced every opportunity of hearing the word of God at Stoke church. But I had been a great sinner, and the Lord kept me in a sorrowful path, especially while the vast and important truths of Scripture were pouring in on my soul. I saw more of the won-

derful things out of God's law every week, and thereby I saw more of my own vileness. Many were my fears and doubts; my heart was full, and I longed to unburden it to some one who could enter into my feelings, and assist me in my difficulties. But whither could I look for such a person? Not in all the circle of my friends and acquaintance: they cared for none of these things. At length, after many debates with myself, I determined on requesting an interview with the man whose ministry had been blessed to the bringing of me thus far. It is almost superfluous to say it was readily granted, or to add how much, under God, I was, and still am indebted for the instruction, advice, and comfort which I received from this christian minister. He endeared himself to me by every act of kindness; his heart and his house were always open to me. In the latter, I beheld all that contrast which exists between the manners of a christian family and those of an ungodly and ignorant world. At Stoke Rectory was all that my peculiar case seemed to demand—retreat from the noise and vanity of former companions, domestic peace, wise and christian counsel, and real friendship. These privileges soon disqualified me for the jovial board, and the idle chit-chat of a fashionable world: they unfitted me for the pleasures of a card-room, the ball and the assembly. I bid them all adieu; no longer esteeming the smiles of their advocates as any thing worth valuing, and no longer deterred from seeking the Lord by their frowns or their jests.—On going to sea, I was enabled to pass through my public duties with much composure; and when in my cabin, I read the Scriptures like one who

had obtained a key, or index, to unfold, what was before unintelligible. Man was no longer a riddle, or his actions unaccountable. I saw him rise and fall, conquer or fly, in his conflicts with the world, himself, and Satan, just as grace was in exercise in his soul.

The awful inconsistencies of Noah, Abraham, David, Solomon, and others, were reconcilable; and, though I trembled, I was not surprised. To enlarge, however, in this part of the Retrospect, would not become me. I shall only add, that from that time to the present, I have been learning, by little and little, more of those great truths which I first heard at Stoke church. The night I left my kind christian friend's house to proceed on board, and thence again to sea, was a time of trial.—The sweets of christian society and domestic peace had been tasted, and these made the rugged scenes and disorders of a ship the more harsh—I felt it difficult to part from the former, and again to unite with the latter. My mind weighed the blessings I was to leave, and the trials and privations I was soon to be exposed to; and it was very sorrowful. This my kind host observed, and said many affectionate things to inspire hope and allay despair; but there was something of the prophetic in his concluding sentence. "Who can tell but the Lord may make you serviceable in the ship?"—At that time I could not entertain the smallest hope of any such thing ever coming to pass; nay, I scarcely dared to think I should myself continue on the Lord's side; but subsequent events often brought his words to my remembrance.

It was on a Friday I returned on board; and on

Saturday we put to sea. The next day of course saw me far from the venerable walls of Stoke church—other sounds than those of its plaintive chiming bells filled my ears, and far different works from those which occupied the assemblies of God's worshipping people there and elsewhere demanded my attention. It was one of the most sorrowful Sabbaths I had ever experienced. Like David of old, I truly envied "the sparrow that had found her a nest about the walls of God's temple, and the swallow who could there attend her young."

For some time past it had been my custom, when agitated or distressed in mind, to retire to my cabin, and there (as I had no friend to whom I could lay open my sorrows, or from whom I could receive suitable advice and consolation) to snatch up the first paper and pen which fell in my way, and converse, as it were, with myself, and carry on my paper complainings, until my mind was somewhat tranquillized. These incoherent epistles rarely outlived the second day; but the one I that Sabbath scrawled was, I know not why, preserved. I have lately received a copy of it, with other memorandums, which I had long supposed were destroyed. I will therefore transcribe it without apologizing for its rude, abrupt, unconnected style, that the christian reader may see, as in a glass, the then state of my mind.

"I am cut off from the Lord's house, his ordinances and his people—I shall hear no more the glad tidings of salvation within the courts of the Most High—and my christian friends are left—perhaps to be seen no more, or at some very distant period—and oh what tem-

ptations! what trials! what difficulties may I not have to encounter! How much do I need line upon line and precept upon precept! Yet all is lost—no—my blessed Saviour will not leave me! My heavenly Father will not in anger cast me off for ever—I feel confident his Holy Spirit will go with me—And O Eternal Lord God! if thy spirit *does* accompany me, it is sufficient—Thou hast declared that all things shall work together for good to them that love thee—O Lord Jesus Christ! thou knowest this is my desire—O that I could confide more fully for time and eternity in thine unchangeable righteousness and love; for in this place of sin and iniquity thou art yet present in abundant mercy, and thy strength is sufficient—Oh it is best even for me to possess no power in the heavenly warfare! for when I am weak then am I strong in thee.”

Again, I observe, I shall make no apology for this production. The christian reader will sympathise with the state of mind which dictated it, and give me credit, when I say that at the time I wrote it, I no more expected it would live to this day, or be laid before the public, than I expected it to be transmitted to the Emperor of China.—After a few days, I became composed, and applied my leisure hours to reading the Scriptures and such works on divinity as my kind friend and minister had recommended, and I hope I may say I grew in the right knowledge and experience of God’s word, and in some measure of resignation to the divine will. But at the end of six or eight months, like the lepers in the Syrian camp, my conscience smote me; and I said, “This is the day of good tidings, and I hold my

peace." Here are more than six hundred souls famishing in spiritual want, perishing for lack of knowledge; they have not worshipped God, even in the form of Sabbath worship, for these five years past; they have had few, very few Bibles—no man has cared for their souls. I could not but feel my superior mercies, and I trembled at the thought of uselessly burying my little talent of knowledge and influence in the earth. But what to do, under all the many and great existing difficulties, I knew not; unless it were to introduce to the captain the subject of reading prayers on the Sunday to the ship's crew. As this was done on board many ships by the commander, or one of the commissioned officers, there was a distant hope of bringing the same about in the C——. But full of fears and cautions, I passed day after day without finding any opportunity of introducing the subject. At length to my great joy, the very thing was done by the captain himself at his dinner-table, where religion happened to be brought on the carpet by some of the company. I need hardly say, that on such an occasion many silly things were advanced, particularly on the point of acceptance, or justification with God. All had given their opinions, except the captain and myself, and had agreed that all religions and creeds were alike acceptable to God, provided men were but sincere in what they professed; and that he who did as he would be done by here, was sure of doing well hereafter, or, in other words, of going to heaven. It had been captain P.'s privilege, when on shore, to live near a pious minister, and occasionally to enjoy his public instructions and private conversation.

These had not been in vain; they had certainly furnished his head with much right knowledge, whatever the state of his heart might be. When, therefore, he gave his sentiments on the subject in debate, he confuted what had been advanced, alleging that, as God had imparted his will to man in the Scriptures, it was not left to man's choice to form a creed suited to his own fancies. I heartily seconded him, and added a few words to prove that neither our scanty performance of relative duties, nor our self-made creeds, could justify us before God, who had appointed his only begotten Son to be wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to a lost world, and that there "was none other name given under heaven, whereby men could be saved, but only that of Jesus Christ." The only reply which followed my few observations was from captain P. himself, in these words: "You preach very well, M——s, and you shall read prayers next Sunday, if you will." My heart leaped with joy. I thanked him, and offered my willing services as often as the weather and public duty would allow. And now the news ran through the ship like lightning, that M——s was to preach next Sunday. Some smiled, others marvelled; but I secretly rejoiced, and thanked God for having thus favourably and unexpectedly opened such a door, and for having proved better to me than all my hopes and expectations. As this was early in the week, I had some opportunities of talking the matter over with the captain, and saying that I had a volume of plain discourses, short, and well adapted to the crew, if he would permit me to read one after the prayers. "Do as you like," was the answer.

At length Sunday came: the day was remarkably fine. No public duty intervened to set aside this holy season. The church was rigged,* the bell rang, and the captain, officers, and entire crew soon took their seats, according to that order and discipline which prevails in ships of war. Much as I had longed for, and pleased and rejoiced as I certainly was at the sight, yet it confounded me. More than six hundred bare heads and attentive looks, all directed to myself, as I advanced to my stand, were more terrible than the muzzles of so many frowning cannon had ever been; a nervous feverish heat actually dried up my tongue, and nearly prevented articulation, which, of course much increased my confusion; in short, this proved one of the most formidable undertakings I had ever embarked in. I literally trembled, while I read through the prayers; and more so, if possible, when I came to the sermon. At length I got through the service, and retired to my cabin, full of confusion and self-reproach, in that I had not looked up with sufficient earnestness to God for a realising sense of his presence, as the only thing that could deliver me from this snare—this fear of man.

O what a poor inconsistent creature is man! who fears the presence of a fellow-mortal more than the eye of his Maker, who shrinks more appalled at the censure of a

* A maritime phrase for clearing away and fitting up a convenient part of the ship, sufficient to seat the whole crew. This is done sometimes between decks, and sometimes on the quarter or upper deck. Stools are placed and flags of different colours suspended round the sides and over-head, so as to form an enclosed place, and to produce a pleasing effect.

worm like himself, than he does at the threatenings of Omnipotence—O Lord God of mercy! pardon thy servant's many, many offences in this particular, from this first public instance of his weakness, even unto the present day. And henceforth give him grace not only to stand up in thy name, but to speak the word with all boldness as he ought to speak who advocates the cause of the King of kings, and Lord of lords!

As the ship continued several weeks off the mouth of Brest harbour, and frequently at anchor, we had service almost every Sunday, not only to all the officers and crew in the forenoon, but I obtained permission to read the Evening Prayers, and a sermon between decks, to such as chose to attend; these were generally about two hundred. That delightful part of divine worship, the singing to the praise and glory of God, was as yet wanting in our assembly. As we had a band on board, I thought it not impossible to form a choir, if I could prevail on some of the men to learn a few plain tunes, and to bear the reproach of "*Psalm-singers*," (a term of derision and contempt, among common seamen, even where there is no such thing as sacred music, or an attempt at it.) Here, again, I succeeded beyond my expectation. For having, on enquiry, found three or four men who formerly sang at church, or in chapels, they consented to meet the master of the band, and such young beginners as chose to practise. In short, in a very little time, we mustered ten or twelve vocal performers, who, with two clarionets and a bass, produced much better harmony than many country parish singers do. It was truly gratifying to witness the attention and apparent interest

with which the greater part of the crew now attended the worship of God. But there was a sad want of Bibles, Prayer Books, and other pious works. This evil, however, was partly removed on our going into port to be paid; as I obtained permission to apply to the Naval and Military Bible Society, from whom we obtained sixty-four Bibles. These, together with some hundreds of good little tracts, being the publications of the Religious Tract Society, I obtained permission to circulate, and saw distributed among the crew, and had the satisfaction of knowing that every mess possessed a copy of the Scriptures. Seldom, from that time forward, did I go between decks without seeing some of the crew reading them.

As soon as possible after this I applied for and obtained permission to form a public library of religious books on the following plan. Every member subscribed four shillings, and was entitled to have one book in his possession, and to change it for any other as often as he pleased; and, in the event of leaving the ship, to take one or more volumes with him as his own. The purser's steward undertook to keep the library chest, and receive and give out the books. Most of the officers gave a gratuitous sum. Our number of subscribers exceeded a hundred and fifty, and our library, when purchased, contained above two hundred volumes of pious, evangelical works, two-thirds of which were always in circulation. Thus, from a state of barrenness, as to the Scriptures and good books, we were soon and easily in possession of abundance: for it must be observed, that many of the crew furnished themselves with Prayer

Books, besides their subscriptions to the library. The next object was to form a day-school for the poor boys. This was soon done, and was daily inspected by myself, and often visited by the captain. The singers, when their duty would permit, still continued to meet between six and eight o'clock, in a retired part of the ship; not that it was necessary to do so merely to practise singing, but, having for several weeks enjoyed this retreat from the noise and folly of the crew, they knew not how to give it up; nor could I find it in my heart to order it. On the contrary, I sometimes went below, and read a chapter or a tract, or a passage from some of our library books, as well for my own edification as for theirs.

Most thoroughly was I aware of my own need of instruction, and gladly should I have received lessons had there been any one to give them. This, however, was not the case; and as the poor fellows were still more ignorant than myself, and willing to be instructed, I felt it a duty in these evening readings, when passages occurred, either in the Bible and other books, which I thought they did not understand quite so well as myself, to endeavour, for a few minutes, to simplify and explain them, and then to read on again, and conclude with prayer, much in the way as many heads of families conduct their evening worship. This done, I dismissed them with a few injunctions to be attentive to their public duties, as the first and best way of reducing to practice what they had heard. Little did I then think that this was the first leading-step towards the pastoral office. Our apartment was soon unable to hold those who came, and many attended without the canvas curtains

which inclosed it. Nor were my hearers confined to the poor seamen and marines; but some of the midshipmen, and now and then one of the commissioned officers, came to hear M——s preach, as they termed my readings. In this manner things went on for half a year, when the storm, which had been silently gathering, began to discharge itself, and the cry of Methodism was in the mouth of several of my brother officers, who knew not the meaning of the word. Added to this, many foolish and false reports got into circulation, as to some of the men preaching. This took its rise from the circumstance of a few of them occasionally reading and praying in their plain and honest way, on some evenings when I was not present. But our revilers could not distinguish prayer from exposition. The same spirit of enmity was shortly displayed by the great bulk of the crew, as had been shown by their superiors. They stigmatized their comrades with the name of Wingers;* and though no one ventured to speak openly before me on the subject, yet I heard of many ungenerous things that were uttered in my absence. I had endeavoured to sit down and count the cost of my undertakings; but such was the fury of the storm when it first broke out, that it beat me down for a season, and, I fear, induced me almost to regret having done any thing beyond reading my Bible alone in my own cabin. But the Lord was merciful—he remembered whereof I was made, and graciously strengthened my hands, by showing, at this very time, how he had owned that work

* From the place where we met being called the Wing.

which man despised. More than one or two instances presented themselves, of very abandoned characters earnestly enquiring what they must do to be saved, and, to the utter astonishment of all their companions, they held on in a new course of life and conversation—Yes!

“The wretch who once sang wildly, danc’d, and laugh’d,
And suck’d in dizzy madness with his draught,
Now wept a silent flood, revers’d his ways,
Is sober, meek, benevolent—and prays.”

Thus encouraged, I went on, endeavouring, by a strict attention to my public duties, and kindness to my brother officers, to do away any real cause of complaint, seldom introducing religious subjects, and never dogmatically thrusting my own opinions on others.

In this way, through the blessing of God, many of them were brought to acknowledge the reasonableness of seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Oaths and unchaste conversation were almost entirely banished from our mess-room, and a blessing was regularly asked by the president at our meals. The visible improvement in many of the *wingers* was a loud-speaking testimony that our Methodism had been useful. The whole of the officers were convinced that I could carry on the public duty without swearing at the men; and that the men could also do theirs without uttering an oath, whenever I was on deck.

About this time a pleasing and indirect testimony was borne to the general improvement of the crew, by one whose words would have considerable weight with many, as never having been suspected of *psalm-singing*,

I mean General ****, who, being on the inspecting service, at Berry Head and Brixham, at the time the fleet put into Torbay, was invited on board by our captain. After he had gone over and examined the whole of the ship, he expressed his high gratification, and particularly remarked to captain B., that he had heard little or no swearing as he passed among the seamen; a circumstance which he considered very singular, and very different from what would have been found on a like occasion among so many troops in barracks. But although the senior lieutenant professed great friendship, and pretended to rejoice at the moral improvement of the crew, he was secretly an enemy to myself and the cause of religion in general. He was a weak and vain man. He viewed me as one who was gaining an ascendancy in the ship, far beyond his own; and his friends in port persuaded him that all our meetings were for mutinous purposes, or that they would end in such. This afforded a pretext for complaint to the captain, who was earnestly solicited to put an immediate and entire stop to all religious assemblies and religious proceedings in the ship; and so effectually did my adversary, in my absence, plead his cause, that orders were the same night issued that it should be as he required. The following day I requested an interview with the commander on the subject; when I endeavoured to show him the absurdity of all fears on the score of mutiny and insubordination, and appealed to facts in proof that the *wingers* were always obedient to command, ready at every call, and foremost in every danger. From this view and statement I appealed to conscience

and plainly declared that I considered our different posts of authority as talents intrusted to us for the good of others—that we owed a duty to men's souls as well as to their bodies—to our God as well as to our country.

The result of this interview was the revoking of part of the severe orders just issued, and the grant for our little meetings to take place twice in the week, provided I were personally present. This was a prudent caution, and left no room for complaint on our part. From this time, until captain P. gave up the command, I had but few troubles to encounter, unless what arose from witnessing the falling away of some professors, and the unsteady walk of others. It was then much as it has been in my former and present fields of labour. On one hand, I rejoiced in hope that the Almighty had set his seal to a part of what had been done: on the other, I grieved at beholding the ravages which the wolf from time to time made in our poor little flock.

At length captain P. left the ship, to the regret of all, and especially of myself, for he had not only been kind, but a supporter of what was good. His successor, captain B., was a man of considerable naval interest, had made much prize-money, and was haughty and impetuous to an extreme. As to religion, he had no other idea of it, but as being useful to keep the lower orders in subjection. He was evidently astonished at the morality of the officers, and certainly endeavoured to restrain his violent gusts of passion and oaths, when commanding the seamen and petty officers on deck. But it was not from right motives. He soon looked on us as a set of Jesuits, before whom it was necessary to

be on his guard. Learning how the Sundays had been kept, he could not, without a breach of order and discipline, totally abolish the observance of divine service. He therefore sent for me, and requested the favour of my reading prayers, as usual, when duty would allow. I did so the next Sunday after he joined us. The singers sang twice, and I produced one of the Village Sermons as formerly; but this was the last time but one that my poor sermon-book made its appearance. Some duty or other was always pleaded, so as never afterwards to allow time for the reading of a sermon; and in one or two more Sabbaths we could not find leisure to sing a psalm. Thus the service was reduced to the mere reading of prayers, and that but occasionally. The poor boy's school was the first object of his attention and objection, as, in his profound judgment, likely to do harm. He doubted not of my good intentions, but he assured us that it was a mistaken idea in all who thought to forward the happiness of the poor by giving them an education. The lads were therefore dismissed, and the table broken up to repair some old partitions.

Well knowing the weakness and enmity of the senior lieutenant's mind, I felt assured he would lose no opportunity of endeavouring to accomplish what he had hitherto failed in. On my first interview with captain B., I therefore informed him of the little party that met below, and requested his permission for a continuance of it when I could be present. To this he consented, being in fact taken by surprise, and unprepared to argue the subject, or deny the request. This was a grand point gained, and I hope we felt thankful to the gracious

Disposer of events for it. As captain B. brought six young gentlemen with him from his former ship, they soon, out of mere curiosity, visited our evening party. To the amazement and vexation of their commander, three out of the number became constant and serious attendants. With these young men I passed many an interesting hour, both in my cabin, and on deck, in the silent night-watches. At first captain B. argued with and cautioned them against being with me; but, finding his arguments avail nothing, he proceeded to threats, and actually sent one very amiable youth into a strange ship at ten minutes' warning, with the declared view of "getting his bishop-like notions out of his head." By this time every officer except myself had quarrelled with this imperious man. The ship was become extremely uncomfortable; courts-martial were the order of the day; and it was but too evident how much hatred existed between the commander and the commanded. For the Gospel's sake I strove to be at peace; and had it not been for my religious sentiments, I believe I should have been a favourite. But, under such circumstances, my countenancing any midshipman or sailor, was a sure prelude to a train of petty oppressions falling on them, especially from the senior lieutenant. The reprobate part of the crew began to triumph over their more serious comrades, and those who were not really in earnest fell away through the fear of persecution. Still the evening meetings continued twice a week; and I think I may affirm, the presence of God was occasionally with us, and that to comfort and bless us.

The reader must not however conclude, that all was

smooth and comfortable, even in these little meetings: no, I have already observed I had to witness the falling away of some professors, and the unsteady walk of others; and here I may add, that Satan found means for a time to distract our little party with contests about election and non-election, principally through the medium of one John T——. He had formerly been in connection with Mr. Wesley's people, and from his knowledge of scripture and psalmody, and an assumed pious exterior, was for a considerable time looked up to as a leading character, by those who were really sincere. But his true state of heart was by and by clearly evident from the fruits it produced; and I felt it my duty first to expostulate, then to rebuke, and lastly to dismiss him from our assembly. Yet he found many opportunities to cavil with and perplex the upright in spirit, and while he himself fell more and more into open sins, to advocate the doctrines of free-will and perfection on earth. At the same time another person, almost as unchristian as the former, was as warm on the opposite side of the question. Thus these ungodly talkers would have completely done the work of their master the devil, and turned our quiet simple-minded people into a set of angry polemics and headstrong bigots, had not the Great Head of the Church said, "Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further." Blessed and omnipotent God! I thank thee that in this day of small things, this early state of my christian labours, thou didst guide me by thy counsel and strengthen me by thy power to steer that course and act that part, which, after several years

of deliberate reading and reflection, I at this day conceive to be the best.

But perhaps some reader would wish to know the general outline of my views, and my mode of stating divine truths to my humble hearers, and which I still hold and approve of. If so, I can gratify him; for I have at this moment a letter before me, which I wrote to a dear and pious friend at the time, and on the express subject in question.

“It has been, and I hope ever will be, my principal object to lead poor unawakened sinners to see their lost estate by nature and by practice, and thence the absolute necessity of regeneration—to point to Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God slain for the sins of the world, as the only rock on which we can build our spiritual house—through whom alone we can procure pardon for the past, strength for the present, and acceptance in future—in point of merit, disclaiming even our best performances as nothing worth, but looking alone to his perfect righteousness, who died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring sinners to God; which righteousness is to and upon all that believe, but none others.—Insisting, at the same time, on the necessity of proving our faith and love in a crucified Saviour by love to his people, and by maintaining good works: it being a vain delusion to confess Christ with our lips, while the tenor of our lives denies him. Thus I hope I have gone on safe ground, without bewildering these babes in religion with speculative divinity, of which Satan makes much, very much use; filling the heads of many with arguments and debates on points frequently non-essential, but

often unfathomable; well knowing while the head is filling this way, the heart is cooling and emptying in one of the most essential properties it can possess, namely, *divine love*.—O how frequently has the arch-fiend made the terms *adoption* and *election* a terror and stumbling-block to young beginners! Yes, those very terms, which are as celestial harmony to many, he converts into a soul-distressing evil to others. Alas! it is too true he is ever seeking whom and how he may devour. But could the sin-burdened soul, under its pressure of an accusing and guilty conscience, be brought to hear the blessed Jesus inviting *all that are in such circumstances* to come directly to him, instead of tarrying by the way to enquire about their election or non-election, they would most assuredly find that peace to their souls, which He who invites them to come would most certainly bestow."

After this digression I shall resume the narrative, by observing, that in the night-watches at sea, when all is quiet, and the weather fine, it is customary for those men who are on duty to sit down in little companies and sing songs, or tell marvellous tales from the Arabian Nights, &c. &c. by way of keeping each other awake. On these occasions the serious part of the people generally assembled together, and either sung hymns or psalms, or discoursed on the things which made for their everlasting peace. Many a time has my heart been lightened of its burden, as I have listened to those honest fellows, while they sang,

“ Weary of wand’ring from my God,
And now made willing to return,

I hear, and bow me to the rod;
 To Thee, not without hope, I mourn;
 I have an advocate above,
 A Friend before the throne of love."

Captain B. had undoubtedly heard the same more than once, though with very different feelings to my own, yet he seemed to want resolution to suppress it. At length, walking the quarter-deck, one fine quiet night, about eleven o'clock, as the crew were singing and relating their stories as usual, he affected surprise, and inquired what noise it was he heard just beneath him. The senior lieutenant, who was then at his elbow, answered in a very significant and sneering tone, it was a party of men singing psalms. "Singing psalms!" replied the infuriated captain; "I'll have no such doings in my ship. Go down this instant, Mr.—," continued he, addressing one of the midshipmen, "go down and ascertain whether they are singing songs or psalms." As the young man quickly returned and reported it to be the latter, an official order was immediately given to disperse the offenders, and to report for punishment any person or persons who might in future be found doing the like. And now our old enemy, the senior lieutenant, recalled the captain's attention to the evening meetings in the *wing*. The latter affected not to know of any such thing having existed and gave immediate orders for their suppression, and for certain officers to visit all parts of the ship every evening, and make report of any assemblies that might be formed for religious conversation, singing, &c. &c. These orders were communicated to me the next morning. It was in vain to

contend against unlimited power. Submission now became our duty, and we endeavoured to act on this principle, though we certainly might have advanced much against the folly and injustice of such proceedings. It was, however, some consolation to know, that all the other officers in the ship, except the first lieutenant, viewed these arbitrary mandates in a proper light, and seemed anxious to express their regret at what had happened, by showing me every little attention in their power, and by extending their kind regards to those young gentlemen who more particularly fell under the oppressive hand of their enraged commander. It was now very common for two or three of the commissioned officers to meet in each other's cabins for serious conversation and reading the Scriptures; but it was, at the same time, a painful thing to witness many of the poor unthinking crew rejoicing at the suppression of our evening meetings, singing of psalms, &c. &c. But such is the enmity of the carnal heart against God!

For some time past my friends had been employed in fruitless endeavours to obtain leave for my return to England, as more than twelve years' unremitting active service on the great deep had much shaken my constitution. The repeated changes of climate, sickness, and various hardships encountered in that period, had laid the foundation of rheumatic and other complaints, independent of the effects of that anxiety of mind under which I had, for more than three years past, laboured in endeavouring to maintain the narrow path of duty, between the trying circumstances of my public station, and those of a follower of Him, whose kingdom and

people are not of this world. These altogether had produced an effect on the constitution, which, to say the least, required some retirement and repose to counteract. Yet hitherto all endeavours had been unavailing, because my little work was not quite done. But, now that the Sabbaths were almost entirely profaned, and our evening meetings altogether suppressed; now that the people were forbidden to engage in religious conversation, or to sing praises to God, under pain of being flogged; now that some were driven out of the ship, and all whom I in any way noticed were oppressed and persecuted; it seemed to myself clear, that my little christian labours were drawing to a close in this place. Under that impression, I besought the Lord to remove me thence, to mark out my future path, and to give me grace to see and follow it. That his gracious providence had opened a way for the introduction of religion, and had blessed the means in various instances, I could have no doubt. I felt equally certain that the change I then beheld could not have happened without his permission. It was not for me impatiently to ask, "O God, how long shall the adversary do this dishonour? how long shall the enemy blaspheme thy name?" I found it more profitable to meditate on our blessed Lord's declaration, and that of his servant, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter"—"Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face," &c. In this manner I passed not more than two or three weeks, when, to my joy and surprise, the long wished-for order arrived, and I was directed to take a passage in one of the ships then about to sail for England.

That very forenoon I had held the command on deck from eight to twelve o'clock, and weary with the heat of the weather and activity of duty, I had gone down to my cabin, stretched myself at full length on a sofa, and was half asleep, when one of the midshipmen came running in, and said, "Sir, I am just returned from the admiral's ship with the order for you to get yourself and luggage ready, and repair on board the Royal Sovereign, as she will leave the fleet in one hour's time." And so it was, that in one hour from being engaged in all the activity and responsibility of my naval profession, and at a moment when I almost despaired of ever obtaining a respite, or seeing again the interior of my native land, I found myself divested of all these cares and responsibilities; removed from under the controul of my unhappy commander; and standing in the quiet capacity of a passenger on my way home; meditating on the impossibility of man's foreseeing what a day may bring forth.

The moment of quitting the C—— was no uninteresting one to my feelings. Many came on deck to see me depart, and many wished me well. I looked round for the last time on a people and place familiar to me for more than four years. A thousand tender recollections were revived; for from the day in which I joined this vessel, to the hour of leaving her, mercy and goodness had not ceased to follow me. My own mind had undergone a great change since the former period, and the same change had been experienced by several others. It was the Lord's doing, and marvellous in my eyes. I could say but little to my poor dejected fellow Christians. Their peculiar case lay near my heart, and that heart

foreboded little else than tribulation as their every day's lot. During the two years that the C—— remained abroad after I left her, the Lord's day was never once observed. The serious midshipmen were ordered never to visit the officers' cabins, unless on duty; and all the officers, of every description, were prohibited from reading religious books to the people.

Thus the Retrospect has carried me through some of the principal events of my life, and in conclusion, has shown the rise and suppression of religion in one of his Majesty's ship of war.* Natural curiosity may prompt

* This ship's complement consisted of six hundred and forty souls. At the time of her return to England, and being laid by in ordinary two years after I quitted her, she had been in commission eleven years. The whole Sabbaths of nearly eight out of the eleven had been entirely profaned, without so much as even the form of divine worship having been observed. Nor was this by any means an uncommon thing in the navy. So far as the writer's observations went, for a certainty two-thirds of our line of battle ships, and nine-tenths of all smaller ships and vessels, were as remiss in honouring and hallowing the Lord's day as the C—— had been. The distinction between Sunday and other days at sea consisted, in the writer's time, of setting aside the more laborious and dirty work, mustering the crew in their best clothes, examining and taking an account of their stock of wearing apparel, reading the Articles of War every fourth week, and giving liberty for the purchase of an extra and unnecessary portion of rum from the shore when in port. When the reflecting mind contemplates this state of things, and connects it with the remembrance of the horrid custom of admitting such swarms of prostitutes on board our ships as soon as they reach their anchorage, (the writer has known more than three hundred of these wretched beings on board his ship at one time,) how evident it is, that He who hath used the instrumentality of our navy to defend

my readers to ask many questions respecting my name, my character, and present pursuits. Now, as to the first of these subjects of inquiry, it really is not worth knowing; and the second can be truly drawn by none except by Him "who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men," and who hath warned both them and me, "if we think we stand, to take heed lest we fall." As to the third, I shall gratify them so far as to observe, that on my return to England, I found my naval friends high in power and office, and willing and able to serve me. God, however, had given me another mind. For, when I looked back through all my professional labours, motives, and acquirements, and tried them in the balance of the sanctuary, I found their amount only vanity and vexation of spirit. Ofttimes had my conscience loudly remonstrated against many parts of my public duty, and there was no prospect but of deepening its wounds while I continued in the service. In the mean time, the concerns of eternity appeared more and more solemnly important. I beheld myself as a creature born for an endless existence, and felt that that existence would be replete with blessedness

and preserve the country, did not give victory for the sake of the great mass which fought her battles! It will, however, afford some consolation to the serious reader to know, that the morals and manners of our seamen in general are gradually improving under the various means now used for their instruction in our sea-ports and the merchant service. Whether any real moral improvement is attempted, or produced on board our ships of war now in commission, I have many doubts to discourage expectation, and but little ground to build any hopes upon—time and events will ere long inform us.

or misery, according as this little span of time was devoted to God or to the world. Viewed through this medium, every thing wore a new aspect, and appeared in a different light to what it formerly had done. When, with eternity on my mind, I looked round and contemplated mankind at large, and those, in particular, whom I left in what is called the high road to honour and happiness, I could not but pity them. I felt the whole force of Cowper's lines, and often repeated them to myself, saying,

“ I see that all are wand'ers gone astray,
Each in his own delusions; they are lost
In chase of fancied happiness, still woo'd
And never won. Dream after dream ensues,
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,
And still are disappointed. Rings the world
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,
And add two-thirds of the remaining half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears—
Dreams, empty dreams!”

What I could I had done to impress their minds with a sense of the reasonableness of seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. I had seen the blessing of the Almighty accompany these endeavours for a season. I had witnessed his unerring providence allow them to be suspended where he had once opened the door for their progress. The same providence had at length removed me from this distressing situation, and in a manner had unfitted me for resuming it again. Indeed, I earnestly longed, should God so permit, to devote my whole life and exertions exclusively to his

service in the established church; to retreat into some humble, quiet nook, and there, far from the strife and tumult of worldly and ambitious scenes, to labour among a poor and plain people for the honour of God, and the good of souls. The subject had been strongly enforced on my attention by several pious friends at Portsmouth and Plymouth, and hence I began to direct my studies, and to arrange my plans in this direction, waiting the indications of Providence to see whether the cloud moved towards the object in view or not. Many and great obstacles presented themselves; but in the Lord's time they all vanished, and my desires were wonderfully accomplished. My humble name found a place on the honourable and awful list of labourers in the vineyard of Christ. The people among whom I was appointed to minister were of that description who formerly heard the word gladly. (Mark xii. 37.) And my situation is as much as possible out of the reach of observation.*

“ Since, then, with few associates, in remote
And humble life, I live, far, far from those
My former partners of the peopled scene,
With few associates, and not wishing more.
Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once, and others of a life to come.

Nor have I any cause to apprehend I have stepped out of that path which a gracious God had marked out for me.

* This more particularly applied to the time when this chapter was first published.

CHAPTER IX.

“THE LORD WILL TAKE VENGEANCE ON HIS ADVERSARIES, AND HE RESERVETH WRATH FOR HIS ENEMIES.”—NAHUM i. 2.

THIS portion of Holy Writ I conceive is declarative of that vengeance which the eternal Jehovah takes in the present life, as well as of that tribulation and wrath which is to be inflicted in a future state. I am well aware how many awful instances of vice and wickedness pass here, without any singular or visible mark of divine anger. Many dreadful sinners are permitted to live out all their days without experiencing any particular trial; without once smarting under the rod of insulted mercy and justice. While they live this is their language: “Our life is short, and in the death of a man there is no remedy. Come on, therefore; let us enjoy the good things that are present; and let us speedily use the creatures as in our youth. Let us fill ourselves with costly wines and ointments; let no flowers of the spring pass by us. Let us crown ourselves with rose-buds before they be withered. Let none of us go without his part of our voluptuousness; let us leave tokens of our joyfulness in every place; let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” That morrow arrives, and “they depart with their hearts full of milk, and their bones full

of marrow ; they are not troubled as other and better men are, neither have they any bands in their death." Stupid, self-confident, and insensible, they quit this stage of mortal existence, and open their eyes in despair and anguish, and begin to drink of that bitter cup which the Lord had reserved for them until that day.

Such is the state and the end of many sinners ; but it is not the state of all. Some there are, who having lived without God and without Christ in the world, depart hence, with all the sure and irresistible forebodings of eternal wrath ; they are not permitted any longer to deceive themselves ; they are made to think of eternal concerns, and to know that "their summer is past, their harvest is ended, and that they are not saved." Not a few of these, it may be, were long esteemed, and even denominated *happy creatures* by their companions in folly and sin. But in the day of visitation, these companions fly from them, as unable to bear and witness the solemn and salutary lessons of such dying beds. Thus the individual bereft of hope and forsaken of man, rolls his eyes in despair, groans as he makes his exit, and quickly enters on a second, an eternal state of indescribable misery.

Others there are, who, in after-life, fight against and overcome every serious impression which the instruction of parents, and the example of pious friends, had once produced. In league with Satan and the world, they contend against all the calls of divine mercy and judgment—they silence all the remonstrances of conscience, and refuse, resolutely refuse, to have Christ to reign over them, until at length the sentence goes forth, "Ephraim

is joined to his idols; let him alone." Of this description I fear the number is greater than many Christians are aware of. He that sojourns much among men, not unfrequently meets companions by the way, who bear every mark of being thus given up to follow the devices and desires of their own hearts—men, whose consciences seem callous, as the flesh seared with a hot iron: who appear to have entirely quenched the Spirit; whose whole conduct bespeaks a reprobate mind, and whose awful end stamps the concluding feature of such a melancholy state. True it is, we ought to be extremely cautious in applying this doctrine to individuals; but it is equally true, that we ought not to confound the sinner with the saint. Charity hopeth all things, only so far as reason, facts, and Scripture authorize her. It is not charity to silence, or contradict, the testimony of these guides. For a Christian to indulge a hope of the eternal happiness of those who persisted in known and allowed sin while they lived, and who died without ever manifesting a reformed practice, or a penitential sorrow—nay, who died in a state of senseless and brutal intoxication, or in the feelings of rage, hatred, and murder; or in reviling God, or in uttering oaths and execrations, this is not charity. It is, to say the least, weakness and error; it is more; it is a tacit disregard or denial of such Scriptures as declare that the unconverted and unsanctified sinner, dying a hundred years old, is accursed.

For our daily support, we know that it shall be well with those who die in the Lord. Their end, we are assured, will be peace; and, for our warning, we also know, that the "impenitent wicked shall be turned into

hell, and all the people that forget God." Our judgment cannot, and ought not, to follow individuals into an eternal world, with any thing like a positive sentence of condemnation, for two reasons: first, because judgment belongeth unto God, and he will repay; and, secondly, because we are ignorant of many particulars which are known unto, and mercifully regarded by, the Almighty. Yet we ought not, I again repeat it, to confound the sinner's fate with that of the saint. If we are afraid to pronounce any one a son of perdition, let us be also afraid to assign salvation to those who, having lived and died in the service of Satan, and in doing the works of the flesh, are pronounced by God himself inadmissible into his heavenly kingdom.

On witnessing such a close of such a life, our minds ought to be filled with solemn awe, with silent resignation to the will and determination of the Judge of all the earth, fully convinced that he will do right. On such occasions we should do well to prostrate ourselves before his mercy-seat, and daily to implore fresh supplies of grace to enable *us* to endure unto the end. Let us remember, that so long as we inhabit a body of sin and corruption, we have abundant cause to pass the time of our sojourning here with fear. For we have to "wrestle not *only* against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Let us, therefore, watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation; let us not only dread the profanity of the blasphemer, and the empty unavailing confidence of the self-righteous Pharisee; but let us shrink back

from every approach to Antinomianism; let us tremble at the idea of viewing sin, either in ourselves or others, with the smallest complacency, of resting in the head-knowledge and letter of the doctrines of election and final perseverance, while we remain destitute of the spirit and practice of those "who are *sanctified by faith* which is in Christ."

What that spirit and that practice is, will sufficiently appear from consulting the few following texts, among many others of a similar tendency: Phil. ii. 5; John iv. 34; Romans viii. 5, 6, 9, 10; Gal. v. 22—26; Col. iii. 12—17; 1 Cor. x. 31; Titus ii. 11—14; Col. i. 10; Phil. iv. 8; Romans vi. throughout; 1 Peter i. 15; 2 Cor. vii. 1.

Having thus far explained myself, I shall proceed to relate a few anecdotes of persons, whose lives and deaths were such, as to leave survivors but little room for hope, and very much for fear, as to their final, their eternal state.

G. H. was one of the crew of the P——, whose wreck and destruction have been noticed in the second, third, and fourth chapters of this Retrospect. He was a most notorious thief, drunkard, and profane blasphemer, such as to engage my notice, reprobate as I was, and the notice of all the officers and crew. He seldom escaped more than six or eight weeks without being flogged, on one of which occasions he frankly told the officers they had better procure his execution, as he should never reform. Dreadfully severe as some of his punishments had been, yet they availed nothing. Time and facts only confirmed the truth of his assertion—he never did reform. Whether he could read or not, or

whether he knew of and believed in the existence of a future state or not, I cannot tell. At this moment I have not the smallest recollection of any one on board ever betraying the least concern about eternity, much less do I recollect any thing in G. H.'s conduct that bespoke him aware that "it was appointed unto all men once to die, and after that the judgment."

His was a life not only of sin, but of hateful sin; hateful even in the estimation of other sinners. It was one unvarying round of punishment, oaths, and falsehood, of theft, drunkenness, and punishment, until the time the ship was stranded. When that event happened, a part of two days and one night were expended in great and laborious exertions, by every officer and man on board, as we supposed. But it afterwards appeared, that, while the rest of the crew were labouring to save the wreck, G. H. had found means to enter one of the officer's store-rooms, and also succeeded in enticing a clownish landsman (who had lately volunteered into the service) to bear him company. There they concealed, and drank themselves senseless, and slept until the exertions of their comrades were relinquished as fruitless, and the vessel was abandoned to its fate. Sleep and cold at length restored their reason, and roused them from their skulking place to discover their situation, as the sole and uncomfortable possessors of His Majesty's ship P——, now lying on its side, bilged, and surrounded with ice.

Having succeeded in kindling a fire, and being a little warmed and refreshed, G. H. proceeded to examine such of the cabins, drawers, and officers' trunks as were ac-

cessible. Plundering was always his delight. but now the abundance of stuff distressed his mind, since he could carry off so little in comparison with the much that must be left behind. To travel with a trunk or load, over the rugged mass of ice that surrounded the wreck, was impracticable; but he determined to carry off as much as he could. To this end he put on several shirts and various other articles of wearing apparel, completing his equipment with one of the captain's uniform coats, mounted with gold epaulets. A pair of large plated candlesticks next fell in his way, which he mistaking for silver, determined to save if he saved himself. Being now tolerably well laden, and having again drunk from the wine cases, he and his companion quitted the wreck, without knowing whither they were going, and, indeed, without understanding the nature and time of the tide. The consequence was, that soon after they left the vessel, they found the ice in motion, and themselves scarcely able to proceed in any direction. H.'s difficulties were of course much increased by the load of clothes on his back, as well as the lumber in his hands; but he seemed utterly insensible to every thing, except saving his pillage, and giving vent to his reprobate feelings, and now more than usually blasphemous mind. Oaths, dreadful oaths and curses, continued to be poured forth from his lips, until one of the massy pieces of ice, on which he stood, clave under him,* not unlike the earth, when it opened and swallowed up Korah and his associates, and he descended with his

* Not from the natural effect of his weight on it, but from the concussion of the surrounding mass or field of ice then in motion.

plunder in his hands, and his oaths on his tongue—and the ice closed upon him, and he was seen no more.

The poor loutish landsman, who at a small distance witnessed and escaped his fate, was exceedingly shocked at what had happened; nor was he much less terrified under the apprehensions of his own danger. He saw no prospect of escaping by land; and, indeed, there was not, at that time, any refuge from impending destruction, but what the wreck itself offered. Thither a gracious Providence directed his attention, and, contrary to all human expectation, enabled him to regain it before the night closed upon him. Here he continued for four or five days, until he was rescued from his solitary and dreary abode by some of the crew who remained at the island. To them, with much honest simplicity, he related the foregoing particulars of himself and the unhappy G. H.

Mr. Z. was a brother-midshipman and messmate in the E——, during the eventful period of three years which I passed in that ship.* He had enjoyed the privilege of a religious education, and the edifying example of pious parents; he knew his Master's will, but he did it not. His father, who was employed in a very respectable mercantile line, was desirous of bringing up this, his only son, to the knowledge and future emolument of his business; but Mr. Z. soon broke through all restraint, and proceeded to such lengths, as to make it necessary he should leave town. Interest was then made with Captain W——, and he was received on

* See Chap. VI.

board as midshipman, not long before we sailed for the Mediterranean. It is but justice to say, that, so far as public naval duty was concerned, he did better than some I have known; but as to his moral conduct, it was awfully depraved. Religion was the constant butt against which he levelled his wit and ridicule. He mimicked the frailties of some good men, and burlesqued the devotions of others. Several times the Lord permitted him to be so filled with his own ways, and so to feel the effects of his vicious course of life, as to be brought to the very brink of eternity. The calls of Providence to him were many and pointed; but he resisted them all with steady persevering success. Not one expression of repentance—not one sign of contrition do I recollect as ever having escaped him on any occasion. For the last two years we were together, my Burder's Village Sermons, and a borrowed Bible, were often on our mess-table. But poor Z. not only refrained from reading them himself, but he greatly opposed others, whom he saw occasionally disposed to look into them. Indeed, such was his profane abuse of sacred things, as to shock the minds of some, who were neither conscientious, nor even moral characters.

Thus he went on from bad to worse, until our return to England, when I joined the D——. Mr. Z. was ordered by the port-admiral to repair on board the Y——: a circumstance as unexpected as it was contrary to his wishes. Our ships put to sea at the same time—stormy weather followed—the squadron was separated—the Y—— was lost—and Mr. Z. and all on board, to the number of five hundred, perished together.

A. B. was a seaman belonging to my last ship, the C——. He was what the thoughtless part of the crew called a jovial good fellow; *i. e.* he was ever ready to take the lead in drunkenness, swearing, filthy conversation, lewd songs, and lewder practice. Religion, and religious characters, were, of course, objects of his contempt. With astonishment he had seen some of his old companions in vice become new creatures; and there were seasons, wherein he would listen, at a distance, to what was passing among the serious men in the *wing*—seasons, wherein his conscience smote and condemned him for the life he led. But he loved sin, and was determined to silence that conscience. He therefore not only did evil himself, but seemed to take pleasure in others who did the same. In this spirit, about two days before his death, he went to one of his most profligate and favourite companions, and prefacing what he had to advance with a volley of oaths, said, “H. you know now that Mr. M——s tells us there is a broad road and narrow one, and you, you old ——, and I are in the broad one.” This was uttered with all that bravado and apparent glorying in iniquity which is peculiar to fools who make a mock at sin.

The second or third night after this his awful declaration, I was ordered on service, with some other officers of the fleet, to reconnoitre the enemy’s coast, &c.; on which occasion A. B. formed one of the crew of my boat. A full moon and clear sky enabled the troops on shore to observe our approach, and to secrete themselves behind the rocks, until we were within pistol-shot of their concealment, when they opened a shower of mus-

quetry on us, from a quarter we least expected, and from which we could neither defend ourselves, nor fly for a considerable time. At length, when our bustle had a little subsided, and we had retired somewhat further off, I inquired whether any had received injury, and to my surprise and joy I heard nineteen out of the twenty answer in the negative. But poor A. B., whose station was the farthest from me, made no reply. I saw he had let go his oar, and was leaning against the boat's side; I went to him, and expressed my hope that he was not much hurt; but he returned no answer. His eyes were closed; and, on examination, I found his heart had ceased to perform its wonted office; for a musket ball had passed directly through the brain, and, in an instant had dismissed the spirit, to give an account of all the things done in the body!

What made the exit of this poor immortal the more distressing, was to learn that, previous to his quitting the ship, he had been boasting of the jovial, or rather drunken, manner in which he hoped to pass the morrow evening, having clandestinely bargained with some others for their grog, with which he intended to keep a feast, either on account of a birth-day or some other particular occasion. But, alas for him! that morrow's sun arose, not to witness the accomplishment of his plans, but to behold his body committed to the deep, to be turned into corruption. I was directed to read the Burial Service on this occasion, and in so doing, made the necessary pause while his corpse was launched into the sea. My eyes followed it as it sunk, until the proud waves had gone over, and hidden it from our sight. My heart was

pained within me; for I had learnt, not only the circumstances already related, but the more distressing one, that he was actually giving vent to oaths and curses when the ball struck him, and closed his lips in silence for ever in this world! Whether I contemplated the dead or the living, it was a solemn theme: when I turned my eyes from following the former into the bowels of the deep, and cast them on the latter, I beheld his nineteen surviving comrades standing around me in thoughtful silence. They, with myself, were so many living instances of a great, a watchful, and a gracious Providence; and had the circumstances of time and place permitted, I should gladly have improved it, and said, "O that ye were wise—that ye understood these things—that ye would consider your latter end!" "O that ye would praise the Lord for his goodness!" and so reflect on that goodness as to be led to repentance!

Whenever I have recollected this preservation of nineteen of the crew, and of myself in particular, it has seemed little less than a miracle, considering how near and how long we were exposed to what may be termed a shower of shot falling like hail among us. It was a time which called for a deliberate exposure of myself, and while I felt it a necessary duty to stand up on the seat of the boat to give my orders and make observations, until we were out all danger, I seldom have had a more composed reliance on the presence and protection of God, than while I was thus acting and seemed as a mark set up for the enemy to shoot at, and which one would think it were impossible for them to have missed.

CHAPTER X.

“CAST THY BREAD UPON THE WATERS; FOR THOU SHALT FIND IT AFTER MANY DAYS.—ECCLES xi. 1.

BLESSED be God for such a command, and blessed be his holy name for such a promise; and blessed be the man who seeks and obtains grace to “work while it is called to-day: who continues steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the works of the Lord;” occupying, with his ten, or his two intrusted talents, until his Lord shall come! Yes! I pray that such may, and I know they will, be blessed. Not that the imperfect services, the deficient obedience of the creature, can look for a reward of merit at the hands of the eternal Jehovah, whose every command all the sons and daughters of Adam have more or less broken; but that it is a present blessing, as well as the earnest of a future one, to be disposed and permitted to unite our instrumentality in the work of Him, who, with infinite ease, could accomplish every purpose of his divine will without our agency.

The fact is, what we call our *duty*, should be called and esteemed our *privilege*. Most men would consider it a great honour, an enviable distinction, to be made the frequent and familiar companions of their monarch’s leisure hours—to assist him in arranging the papers of his portfolio, or in adjusting the trifling disorders of his

library. These little offices would be esteemed, not as a task, a labour, or a burden, but as a pleasure, a privilege, and a mark of kind condescension; especially if the parties knew their monarch could himself do the thing much better, but that he chose this method of showing his attention and love to them. Well, then, my christian readers, let us endeavor to esteem it our privilege to do the will of Him who sent us hither. And when he invites and directs us to cast our bread upon the waters, to sow our seed in the morning, and in the evening not to withhold our hand, let us learn to go about the work, not as a task, a labour, or a burden, but as a pleasure, a privileged employment in the service of One, who, though King of kings, and Lord of lords, hath nevertheless shown *us* this mark of distinction; "that we should be workers together with God."

But here, perhaps, two classes of people will step forward and throw in their complaints; the *first* lamenting that their situation in life is and has been such as to exclude them from doing any thing for the glory of God and the spiritual good of others: the *second*, that they have "all day long stretched forth their hands to a stiff-necked and gainsaying people;" that they have long continued casting their bread upon the waters, but that the stream of sin and rebellion has uniformly swept all their labours into the ocean of forgetfulness, and none have believed or remembered their report.

To the former class of my complaining brethren I would beg leave to observe, that nothing is more common than for Satan and our own hearts to lead us into wild speculations, and fanciful plans and persuasions,

how we would act were we in this man's situation, or in the other's—what we could and would do, were we possessed of this man's wealth, or of that man's talents and influence. Many a time, my dear reader, have I caught myself thus building up goodly castles in the air, wasting, and worse than wasting, my time in idle Don Quixote-like reveries, to the overlooking and forgetting that I had my work to do, and my station to act in; and that, hereafter, I should have to give up my account, and be reckoned with, not according to what I had not, but according to the talents I possessed.

Be assured my reader, there is not a situation under heaven wherein the real Christian is utterly debarred all opportunities of acting for the honour of God and the good of his fellow-creatures. The poor man on his crutches, and the destitute widow on her sick couch may honour, and often have honoured, God and edified others. When bereft of every thing this world calls great and good, they have possessed a contented mind as their continual feast. If their neighbors have witnessed the rod of affliction enter their dwelling, they have also witnessed their cheerful resignation to the will of Him who breaks and makes whole. Many a precious and scriptural word of exhortation hath proceeded from the lips of poor and rustic christian sufferers to the edification not only of the poor and simple, but of the more prosperous and learned also. As an individual I hesitate not to confess, in the face of the world, that on many occasions when I have visited the poor and afflicted of Christ's flock, in the character of a teacher, I have myself been taught, both by their words and example.

As to the poor man who is in health, if he have any portion of the love of God shed abroad in his heart, by the Holy Ghost, sure I am, he need not, he will not look far for opportunities of glorifying God and benefiting others. His own family or fellow-servants, or near neighbours, will present a field for all his talents and exertions; a field wherein he may labour according to his abilities, and be approved of Him who hath already said to many, "Well done, thou good servant; because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority," &c.

It certainly is not necessary that a man should possess great power or extensive talents to be "useful in his day and generation." Of this truth Jerry T., one of the crew of the C——, was a striking instance. His situation in the ship was that of officers' barber and hair-dresser. Being a cleanly smart young man in his person, and rather clever at his business, as well as handy in doing little jobs in the officers' apartments, he was a sort of privileged man, and had access to most of their cabins and private liquor cases whenever he pleased.

Like barbers in general, Jerry had often some news to relate, or some subject to talk about while performing the duties of his office; but on the topic of religion he was silent. Not but that he could read very well; but having been born in Ireland, and brought up a Roman Catholic, he literally knew nothing beyond what had been imparted through the medium and mummery of paintings, images, processions, legends, and deluded friars.

It however pleased God, in the early stage of our

exertions, to bring him to a clear understanding of gospel truths. His was an honest mind, and open to conviction. He attended to the readings in the *wing*, and retired and examined his Bible for himself. The Dagon of Roman Catholic ignorance and idolatry fell before him. But this was not all. He not only understood the doctrines of the Gospel, but he felt their renovating effect; and so far as a steady consistent walk and conversation could prove the fact, he was in Christ Jesus, and became a new creature. And now began his trials from the ship's company in general, and the officers in particular. For several weeks every one of the latter would *roast* Jerry, as they termed it, on the subject of his Methodism, and praying and singing of psalms in the *wing*; but these *roastings* did not continue beyond half a year, for within that period he had, by a continuance in well-doing, put them all to silence.

There was so much propriety in his general conduct, so much firmness and patience under ridicule and temptation; such a wise, steady, and yet unassuming manner of defending the cause of religion, when compelled to answer, that he advanced in the esteem of his superiors beyond any thing I could have conceived. In short, he lived to hear some of these officers converse with him on religion in a strain widely different from ridicule and reproach. As to his conduct among his comrades below, it was such as to comfort me whenever I heard or thought of it. We had many Roman Catholics on board, most of whom were extremely ignorant and profane, as well as deplorably bigotted and superstitious. Among these he laboured, reading from the word of

God, and conversing with such zeal and understanding, that he was hated by the grossly profane, dreaded by those whose consciences were not entirely callous, and beloved by such as were seeking the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth. Nor have I a doubt but the last day will prove, that no small share of what was effected on board the C—— was brought about through the divine blessing on the instrumentality of Jerry T——. He, therefore, has added one more to the numerous instances that might be brought forward, in proof of a fact which claims our most serious and grateful attention—that great power and extensive talents are not always necessary to a man's being useful as a Christian in his day and generation.

As to the *second* description of complainers, who lament their having long cast their bread upon the waters, without the smallest prospect of its being found to any good purpose, let me remind them, that it is not always best for us to see too much success attend even our most christian-like labours. It is sufficient for us to know that these labours will not be in vain in the Lord: that “the word is not to return void, but is certainly to accomplish the thing whereunto it is sent;” in other words, that “the bread cast upon the waters is to be found after many days.” *We are answerable for casting this bread, but not for its being found.* The former is our work; the latter is the LORD'S. But it must not be forgotten, that in every place where exertions have been made for the glory of God and the good of souls, many who were expected to become the first fruits of an early spiritual harvest, have not been gathered in until a late

hour, and many not at all; while, on the other hand, some, of whom little, or perhaps no hope, was cherished, have turned out the most flourishing plants in the Lord's vineyard. Of this I have seen repeated instances, from the day I first began my humble work of reading to a few poor seamen in the *wing* of the C——, even to this day. But as the last instance of this nature which occurred on board that ship was somewhat out of the common way, I shall adduce it in proof that we ought not to be discouraged when we cast our bread upon the waters, however rough and gloomy those waters may appear to human eyes.

Robert A. was a young man of rather superior understanding to seamen in general, and, being excessively fond of reading, he had perused and imbibed much evil from many novels, and other vile books; so that with his natural and acquired talents, he was enabled to proceed some degrees in profligacy beyond many others. He was, what he styled himself in a letter which I now possess, "the veriest slave to all manner of vice of any one in the ship." Not all the discipline of the service, nor the presence of his superiors, was sufficient to bridle his impure and blasphemous tongue.

The second in the Naval Articles of War provides, "that if any officer, mariner, or soldier, shall be guilty of profane oaths, cursing, execrations, drunkenness, uncleanness, or other scandalous actions, in derogation of God's honour and corruption of good manners, he shall be punished as a court-martial thinks he deserves." This is a good and salutary law, but most wretchedly executed. I had been more than ten years at sea without wit-

nessing any thing like a regular punishment for oaths, cursings and execrations. At length, however, poor Robert A. furnished an instance. Having gone beyond all bounds of order and decency, he was one day tied up, and actually flogged for a breach of the former part of the above-cited Second Article of War. This made him more circumspect in the presence of his officers, but it could not reach his heart. He therefore continued in his general conduct much the same, until God himself effectually wrought on his soul, which was done in the following way.

Being one forenoon stationed in the main-top, and having no active duty to employ his time and drown reflection, he opened the chest,* and, to his joy, observed a book. In hope of finding some idle story to beguile his mind, he opened it, and began to read. The volume belonged to our circulating library; it was "Doddridge's Rise and Progress of religion in the soul;" a subject, above all others, most unwelcome to one in his state; yet he read on, to use his own words, "torturing himself by every line he read." Again and again he wished the book had been a thousand miles off, or that he had never seen it; yet he told me "that he could not put it away. The reading of it," he said, "pricked him

* In each of what the landsmen call *round-tops*, is a chest for holding muskets, seamen's working tools, &c. &c. The main-top of a seventy-four gun ship is capable of seating twenty men: and at sea there is always a greater or less number of people aloft, in readiness to execute such duty as may be required. It was, therefore, one of my objects to keep a certain number of our library books in the top chests for their perusal.

to the heart, but still he read on, drawing all the comfort he was able from the thought, that by and by twelve o'clock would arrive, and then he should be relieved from this post, and *obliged* to put the book away." Twelve o'clock at length came, and, being relieved, he flew below; but he could not fly from his convictions. Ten minutes were found abundantly sufficient to take his dinner, and having left his messmates to drink both his and their own grog, as they pleased, he again sat down to the tormenting, but irresistible book. From that day he became a most patient, meek, and humble Christian. He separated from his old iniquitous companions, and passed his leisure hours in hearing, reading, and singing with the *wingers*, whom he had heretofore so cordially hated and despised. Nor was all the opposition of his former comrades able, in the smallest degree, to shake him.

When I first heard the report I could not give it credit, until I had sent for Robert A. to my own cabin, and satisfied myself. Indeed, so unexpected and great was the change, that it not only excited general notice, but it actually produced a kind of uproar throughout the seamen's berths, many of whom, like myself, would not credit what they heard, until they had satisfied themselves. To this end some beset him with arguments, and some with oaths and ridicule; others brought him grog, as a supposed irresistible temptation; and when he steadily refused to drink, they threw it in his face. All this, (though of a naturally high spirit) he bore patiently, never to my knowledge uttering one unbecoming expression, or doing one unchristian act, from

the day in which he found and read the book in the main-top, to the time of my leaving the ship.

Let us then, my discouraged reader, take shame to ourselves for fainting and growing weary in well-doing. Let the instance of this poor reprobate, Robert A., and others hereafter to be produced and illustrated, encourage us to cast our bread upon the waters; fully confident that it will be found in the Lord's good time; that it will be found when it shall most redound to the praise of the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER XI.

“FOR MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT YOUR THOUGHTS, NEITHER ARE YOUR WAYS MY WAYS, SAITH THE LORD: FOR AS THE HEAVENS ARE HIGHER THAN THE EARTH, SO ARE MY WAYS HIGHER THAN YOUR WAYS, AND MY THOUGHTS THAN YOUR THOUGHTS.”

ISAIAH lv. 8, 9.

THERE are few portions of Holy Writ to which my mind turns with more frequency, or with more delight, than to the above, and that in 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 12.

“For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part, but then I shall know even as also I am known.”

Indeed, there are seasons when I feel an inexpressible interest in anticipating the fulfilment of the concluding promise, of “knowing even as I am also known;” because my present imperfect vision and limited knowledge but too often gave rise to doubts and fears. Wherever the mind directs its attention, whether to the past, the present, or the future, how many difficulties present themselves, not to be solved by man! A dark cloud rests on much of the divine proceedings in many events which have been, and on many that now are, and pro-

bably on many that may continue to take place on earth. We know that the eternal Jehovah works for the glory of his own great Name, as the ultimate end of all his mighty and gracious operations. Yet the wicked often flourish like a green bay tree, and the righteous are cut off. Sin stalks forth with mighty strides, and fills almost the whole earth with its evils. Here and there we discover a plant of grace; but it is not unfrequent that these are removed by a premature and unexpected stroke, just as the blossom is opening, and we are pleasing ourselves with the thought of the harvest of fruits which they will bear to the glory of God and to the good of mankind. Now when we recollect that all hearts are in the Lord's hands, and all events under his control; we cannot help exclaiming, with Elihu and Isaiah, "Touching the Almighty we cannot find him out; for his thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are his ways as our ways," &c. He works, indeed, on the left hand, but we cannot fathom his intentions: he hideth himself on the right hand, that we cannot see into the arcana of his divine will, or understand the purposes of his infinite wisdom and justice, in many things which he permits or ordains to come to pass.

How delightful, then, to turn to the Bible, and hear this great, this wise, this glorious Being say to us his creatures, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter!" How delightful to think, that, after a few more suns have risen and set, our days of sin and imperfection will be ended; the glass, through which we now see so darkly, removed, and we shall know, even as also we are known!

These thoughts greatly relieved my mind, as I was the other day looking over some letters of a dear departed friend, whose gifts and graces, whose connections and rank in society, and advancement in the divine life, had engaged the attention, and raised the expectations, of all Christians who knew him; but whose premature death has furnished another instance of the short-sightedness of man, and of the mysterious darkness that often envelopes the ways of Him who, "being excellent in power and in judgment, and in plenty of justice, does nothing in vain."

As the *Retrospect* has led me to produce a few anecdotes of others, it may not be out of place to bring forward so much of the life and character of this amiable person, as may serve to illustrate the foregoing observations. It will be a pleasing task to pay this small tribute to his memory: and it may not be altogether uninteresting to some of my readers, although in giving it, I must continue to speak of and exhibit myself more than is desirable. But the candid reader will see there is no alternative between doing so or maintaining a criminal silence, where the goodness and grace of God call for a certain degree of publicity. I therefore prefer incurring censure for the former, (if censure be due,) rather than condemnation for the latter.

As it is not necessary that my readers should be acquainted with the real name or family connections of my departed friend, I shall speak of him under that of Macarius, and commence my account by observing, that it was not more than a year before I quitted the C—— that I became acquainted with him, and his particular

and truly honourable friend, whom I shall call Eugenius. At that time we all held lieutenant's commissions; but Macarius and Eugenius were on board the commander-in-chief's ship, waiting for, and daily expecting, promotion to the command of a vessel. From the first hour I became known to these young men, I had reason to admire their conduct; standing, as they did, in a very trying situation, and maintaining, as they long had done, a very praiseworthy and interesting part.

The number of officers, and extent of society on board a first-rate ship of war, carrying the flag of a commander-in-chief, is far greater than many of my readers are aware of. This was particularly the case with the one in question. But, out of all the officers who composed the staff, and filled the naval, military, medical, and civil departments, there were none, except Macarius and his friend, who treated religion with respect, unless the total silence and perfect neutrality of a few could be esteemed such. It was frequently the subject of conversation, and as frequently the subject of contempt and ridicule, even at the commander's own table, where men of considerable reading and intellect levelled their raillery and deistical objections at Christianity and serious characters. This was the real and melancholy state of things at the very time when some of these officers were considered serious men by many, who had read their character only in the language of some public orders and official documents. Unhappy men! what does it now avail that your distant and deceived fellow-mortals once thought highly either of your public or your moral characters? Ye have, at least most of you,

been summoned to the tribunal of Him who cannot be deceived, and who will not always be mocked with impunity. Their idol, this beloved world, is now left behind, too unfaithful to continue blazoning forth that commendation which they so anxiously desired—too impotent to administer one drop of water to cool a parched and burning tongue!

May the survivors, who aspire after earthly honour, be led to seek that honour that cometh from above, if God peradventure would give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth!

From these unhappy children of this world, let us turn to Macarius and Eugenius, in whom religion and the Bible found two sincere, if not powerful, advocates. It cannot be expected that young men in their circumstances should be deeply read in theology, or capable of meeting all the cavils of gainsayers in a systematic form. To such attainments they made no pretensions. But that gracious Being, who never leaves himself without witness, did not suffer them to be carried away, or even shaken, by the arguments and rank of their opposers;

“Nor number nor example with them wrought,
To swerve from truth.”

They were not disputants either from divinity schools or in their own natural disposition, but they revered their Bible. They professed not to be theologians, but they believed the Scriptures to be the word of God. They were not theoretically acquainted with the peculiar and distinguishing doctrines of Christianity, as revealed in

those Scriptures, any more than thousands of others in this land; but they were strictly moral, and, in their whole conduct, acted up to what they knew and conceived to be right. In short, as moral and upright men, they were not far from the kingdom of God. At the same time, the greatest suavity of manners stamped their general character, and it is difficult to say whether they were more to be admired for their gentlemanly behaviour, when below with their brother officers, or for their able and excellent method of carrying on the public duties of the quarter deck. Certainly they were worthy of imitation in both respects.

Such were Macarius and Eugenius, in character and circumstances, when I had the happiness of becoming first acquainted with them. The dispersed state of our fleet seldom allowed of our being together. But we endeavoured to improve all opportunities of exchanging letters; and as I found them, like Cornelius the centurion, very desirous of being further instructed in the things of God, I sent them Wilberforce's *View of Christianity*, Cooper's *Sermon's on the leading Doctrines of the Gospel*, and some other books likely to be useful. These I accompanied, from time to time, with such remarks and advice as I was able to give, aiming chiefly at two things; first, to fortify their minds against "the trial of cruel mockings," by insisting on the reasonableness and paramount necessity of seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and, secondly, endeavouring to lead them into clearer apprehensions of the Gospel plan of salvation. Nor were my labours in vain in the Lord. Their views expanded rapidly,

and their hearts entered into the subject. Eugenius, however, was soon promoted to the command of a ship, and on his quitting the fleet, we were no longer able to keep up so frequent and regular a correspondence.

This separation was no small trial to Macarius. He was now left without one person on board to whom he could unbosom himself on the great subjects of religion, of life, death, and eternity. He stood alone, without one friend to strengthen his hands, or to support him in his defence of the Bible and its sacred contents; a trial which many of my readers, nurtured in the bosom of a religious circle, can but feebly realize in their minds. In his next note I received from him, he expressed his feelings on the great loss he had sustained, observing, "that although he had the happiness of being on the best imaginable terms with all the officers, as far as worldly concerns went, yet he still found something wanting to render their society agreeable."

Not long after this event the Commander-in-Chief left the ship, with most of the officers of his staff, and Macarius once more found himself disappointed of his expected promotion. Solomon has observed, that "hope long deferred makes the heart sick." But the case of Macarius was an exception. Hope had here been long deferred, and expectation more than once baffled, yet the heart was not sick, nor the mind ruffled; for earthly expectations were now but secondary things with Macarius. His first hope and most ardent expectations were above; hence he appeared to enjoy the privacy and quiet to which the ship was reduced, far more than

to regret the present loss of expected promotion, as the change was not a little in favour of religion.

Captain ***, who hitherto had maintained a silent neutrality, (overawed perhaps by the rank and number of opposers,) began to encourage the observance of the Sabbath, and, as the ship had no chaplain, he undertook to perform divine service himself. I need not say how much Macarius rejoiced at this dawn of a better state of things. As a christian warrior, he considered it the unfurling of the standard of the cross, and the call to arms. His mind was all activity, and continually on the look out for opportunities of entering into such conversations with the captain and other officers as might lead their attention more closely to the subject, and induce them to read the books he had found so useful to himself. In this he had considerable success. Two of the lieutenants eventually became serious and intelligent Christians, and have continued to adorn the doctrines of the Gospel by a holy walk and conversation to this day; indeed, one of them is now in the ministry in the Established Church. At the same time his attention was unremittingly turned to the great mass of the crew. On going to Gibraltar, he procured fifty Testaments, and a quantity of religious tracts, which he distributed among the seamen and marines. That God whom he desired to serve was pleased to encourage him to proceed, by disposing many of the people to read them with serious attention, so as to lead him to say, in his next letter, "I assure you it is with heartfelt pleasure I perceive that, even here, where religion has been so much neglected, there are many sparks of it yet unextinguished."

Shortly after this he formed a little select evening party of such officers as appeared at all seriously disposed. These met for reading, and moral and religious conversation, in his cabin, as often as the circumstances of public duty would admit. This, the cold and empty formalist will say, was beginning to carry things to an unnecessary length; and so, it appears, they thought on board his ship. "I find," said Macarius, in the next note I received, "the adversary begins to feel his province invaded, in the loss of some of his disciples, and the dread of a change in others. He is busily employing his terrible weapon of ridicule on some of those who profess religion, and who frequent my cabin. This you will consider, with me, as a good sign." I did so; and could not but thank God, when I saw my friend not only stand the shock unmoved himself, but steadily persist in leading on, and encouraging his little band to the same trying warfare. I now considered him in the fair way of experiencing the various comforts and crosses inseparable from real christian practice. I knew that many eyes would be on him for evil, and that every deviation from the narrow path of duty would be observed, commented on, and unfeelingly magnified. I therefore took the liberty of communicating my thoughts on various subjects connected with his and my own peculiar duties and trials as Christians and officers, with some short account of the difficulties and merciful helps I had experienced; and, as he wrote to me rather fully in reply, I shall transcribe so much of his letter as will show his teachableness of mind, his activity, and his increasing knowledge of gospel truths.

“MY DEAR M——s,

“I did hope to have had an opportunity of seeing you last week; and had not our ships been always so far apart, I should certainly have endeavoured to call on you. I find your advice so congenial to my own ideas of duty, that I much wish it were in my power to have more frequently the benefit of it. An account of the progress the Lord enables you to make in awakening the minds of your fellow-creatures to a sense of the importance of religion, always animates me to exertion, and recalls to my mind the dreadful sentence passed on the slothful servant, who hid his talent in the earth. I am convinced we all have it in our power to do much good, and I blush at my own inactivity in promoting a cause which, thanks be to God, I every day feel more impressed with the love of. To my acquaintance with you, my dear M——s, I am indebted for what I consider the greatest blessing man can bestow on me. I have been induced to read books which have given me a clearer view of the natural and lost estate of man, and of his happy redemption, through the merits of a Saviour, than perhaps would otherwise have come within my reach. Indeed I see the scheme of salvation in so different a point of view from what I formerly considered it, that I tremble in reflecting on the dangerous precipice on which I stood. How little, alas! is Christ looked up to, as the *sole* hope, by the generality of professed Christians! Self-righteousness is too often more depended on, or, at least, has an equal share in their hopes; and the discourses of too many of our divines, I am sorry to find, countenance this deception; for, in dwelling too

much on morality, they forget the very foundation of Christianity.

“ Captain * * * continues to countenance religion by reading divine service on the Sabbath. In the hope of rendering myself in some degree useful in the same cause, I have, for the last two Sundays, with his permission, performed the same office in the sick bay,* where, independently of the number who are there confined by illness (which generally amounts to more than thirty), I have the pleasure of seeing two of the warrant officers, and several of the other gentlemen. I have each time read one of Taylor’s Sermons, but I don’t admire them so much as I could wish, for the reason which I before mentioned. They contain very plausible arguments in favour of what is commonly styled religion; but, in my own opinion, they do not explain the true scope of Christianity, nor do they inform the sinner how he is to commence the work of reformation. In short, I think they are not calculated to bring people to a sense of their sole dependence on Christ, or to induce them to have recourse to a throne of grace for every good and perfect gift. If you can supply me with any which are better calculated to combine Christianity with morality, you will oblige me by so doing. I think I have heard you speak highly of Burder’s Village Sermons. My evening cabin party still assembles, and last night amounted to four. I retired with a degree of inward satisfaction, which, I am sure, no gaiety or dissipation could ever have afforded.”

* A large room fitted up for the sick, separate from the rest of the crew.

As I had more than one copy of the Village Sermons, I lost no time in forwarding a set, which Macarius assured me were not idle in his ship. They were in many hands, and formed the principal readings in the sick bay. But the time was come for a wider separation. The order for my return to England arrived, and I quitted the fleet without being able to take a personal farewell. Macarius, however, continued to go steadily on, until the Board of Admiralty promoted him to the rank of commander; and of course obliged him to quit his present situation. This took place not long after my own removal; and, as he was not appointed to a vessel, he returned to England, and repaired to his long absent and affectionate mother, to enjoy the comforts and blessings of domestic and christian society.

He now embraced every opportunity of enlarging his circle of religious friends, and the providences of God threw him into much of what may be truly called the best society. It was a season greatly to be remembered, and would have been so to old age, had he been permitted to reach that period. It was indeed a spiritual harvest, a summer of mental blessings; and, as such, he esteemed and endeavoured to improve it. But in the midst of this company of first-rate Christians, and under all his own advancements in knowledge and grace, he never forgot the humble instrumentality of his friend; nor scarcely ever wrote a letter without alluding to our past days of small things, when sailing on the bosom of a foreign ocean.

Like all others, he had to contend with a world that lieth in wickedness. In the first letter I received after his

arrival in England, he said, " I meet with some opposition, and no doubt appear to many as very singular in my opinions; but, while I know that 'the carnal heart is enmity against God,' and that all who *will* live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution; I not only expect this, but consider it as a confirmation of my inward hopes of being in the road of truth. A wish to improve in the knowlege of this 'one thing needful,' to qualify myself for being useful to others, particularly to those of our profession, who sit in much gross darkness, and the hope of being instrumental in bringing some of my relations to a true knowledge of Christ, is my only wish for remaining unemployed. For these reasons I have not yet made application for a ship, nor do I think I shall before the summer."

In perfect consistency with these declarations, he applied his active mind in the unremitting pursuit of that knowledge "which maketh wise unto salvation:" and he certainly grew in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Hence deep self-abasement, continual upbraidings of his heart for want of more activity in, and devotedness to the cause of his Redeemer, and a child-like submission to all the will of God concerning himself, were features more and more conspicuous in his letters. His last was written but a few days before his appointment to the B——, and his consequent putting again to sea.

At that time my mind was very anxiously directed towards the work of the ministry, and much exercised in contending with various difficulties which lay in the way of entering on that great work. His friendship

would not permit him to look on any subject with indifference, that much engaged and agitated my mind, much less the present one. His letters were, therefore, filled with declarations to that purpose, intermingled with repeated observations, that constant submission to the will of God was our privilege and duty in this and all other things. Nor did he inculcate a doctrine in others, and neglect to apply it to himself. Perhaps there never was any period of his life which required the application of these truths more than the then present moment. He was on the eve of being appointed to a ship, and to be ordered he knew not where, or on what service. He had many dear and affectionate friends, in whose happiness he took no small interest. He was going to leave them, and again to contend with all the dangers, privations, and difficulties of his professional situation. In this state of things he sought and found a degree of tranquillity of mind, which none but God could bestow. "I wish for nothing," was the language of his letter, "I wish for nothing for myself, but what seems good in his sight; and my earnest prayer is, for grace to feel contended with whatever lot in this life his providence may order for me. Should your prospects vanish, he will enable you to bear the disappointment: should they succeed, I trust you will indulge the thought that the success is from him."

Such was his state of mind when his appointment reached him. He embarked in the new and important situation of a commander. Nor did his subsequent conduct disappoint the high expectations of his friends. His unwearied and paternal care to bring up his young mid-

shipmen in the fear of God, and to the honour and real service of their country, was such as to excite the most grateful feelings in their parents' bosoms; while his steady perseverance in discipline, benevolence, and piety, soon gained the respect and love of all classes on board, so far as the children of this world can love the children of God.

As to his more immediate and general public conduct as a commander of one of His Majesty's ships of war, it left no room for doubt. For although the B—— was a very inferior vessel in point of force and sailing, yet, such was his activity, and such the blessing with which Providence followed his conscientious endeavours to serve his country, that he made more captures than any other commander on the station. Through a winter, and on the coast of America, in a climate far more severe for cold and storms than our own, he was continually under way, chasing, cutting off, or boarding the enemy's vessels in shore, while our squadron of larger ships could do little more than lie off at anchor, and witness his almost incredible perseverance. From one of these witnesses I have been personally informed, that for three weeks together, Macarius has been known not to have gone to bed, his only rest being an occasional half-hour's repose on a mattress, from whence, at a minute's warning, he ascended the deck at all hours, to brave out hail-storms, sleet, and snow, continually. Yet even this state of incessant activity and severe public duty did not prevent his performing morning and evening prayers every day!

No one will be surprised to hear that, in a short time

he most completely established his reputation, not only with his comrades in the fleet, but among his enemies on the shore: so that, when a very important expedition was planned, for the capture and destruction of a large convoy, moored in one of the enemy's rivers, Macarius was appointed to command the flotilla. Let it suffice to say, that this service was crowned with the most complete success in the extent of its captures, and in the exceedingly small loss sustained on the part of the British. For notwithstanding the number of soldiers brought to the banks of the river, to annihilate, as they expected, our little troop of heroes, such was the wisdom and presence of Macarius's mind, that the enemy was eluded, and he returned, like David of old, to receive the applause of his countrymen, for having "gone in and out before them" in much courage, wisdom and success. The enemy's newspapers gave a report of this attack, and concluded their observations by saying, "Thus ended an expedition, the most destructive to our states, and effected with the smallest loss on the part of the English, of any thing that has been undertaken on our coasts since the commencement of the war."

Of the same opinion were the Lords of the Admiralty, and the Commander-in-Chief on the station. For the latter soon appointed him to a larger ship, with the rank of post captain, and the former confirmed the appointment. Thus Macarius, at an early age, was advanced as far up the scale of naval promotion as he could go, until years and seniority should bring him within the reach of an admiral's flag. The prospect was cheering to all who knew him: but especially so

to his christian friends. These now looked forward to the exertions of his energetic mind through a wide field of action, not only in the important duties of his professional character, but in the more important ones of a christian philanthropist, devoted to the best interests of mankind. His rank would now lift him above the control of ignorant and irreligious men, and his wisdom and piety could not but be expected to influence many around him. Yes—we fondly hoped, that for this very end the Lord had raised him up, and that many years would be added to his days, and much fruit be borne to the honour of religion and the glory of God. But herein our thoughts were not as the Lord's thoughts. For it was but a little while after obtaining this promotion, that he was ordered to cruise off a distant part of the coast. The weather proved severely tempestuous, his ship foundered, and Macarius, with all his crew, sunk in the deep waters, to rise no more until the last trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall awake; until the graves shall be opened, and the sea shall give up her dead.

This is one of those events which compel us to exclaim, "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out!" It is one of those events which endear the words of our Lord to my soul, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." O Macarius! how unlike art thou to thy poor sorrowing friends on earth! Thy feet tread the cities of the living God, while ours but too often stumble on the dark mountains of ignorance, error, and sin. Thy vision is now unobscured by a body of flesh; thy knowledge is no longer

confined within mortal limits. In the glory and light of God thou beholdest light, thou seest face to face, thou knowest even as also thou art known. Thy body, indeed, is sown in corruption, and for an appointed season must lie entombed in the great deep; but, even there, it rests in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection unto an eternal and blessed state. Yes, that which has been sown in dishonour shall be raised in glory, re-united to its kindred spirit, and with it worship before the throne of God and the Lamb! Adieu, then, my Macarius!

“ My lost companion, kindest friend, adieu !
 Your toils, and pains, and dangers are no more ;
 The tempest now shall howl unheard by you,
 While ocean smites in vain the trembling shore !

On you the blast, surcharged with rain and snow,
 In winter's dismal nights no more shall beat ;
 Unfelt by you, the vertic sun may glow,
 And scorch the panting earth with baneful heat.

The thundering drum, the trumpet's swelling strain,
 Unheard, shall form the long embattled line ;
 Unheard, the deep foundations of the main
 Shall tremble when the hostile squadrons join.

Since grief, and sin, and sorrow still molest
 The wandering vassals of the faithless deep,
 O happier thou, escaped to endless rest,
 Than those who still survive to err and weep !”

Yet must thy friend indulge his sorrow, though not as one without hope. From him the pleasing dream is quite vanished—hope and fancy can now no more beguile his mind with the prospect of seeing thee in this humble retreat; to him on earth thou wilt never more

relate thy conflicts, nor tell thy sorrows or thy mercies; nor will he impart to thee the long account of ways by which the Lord hath led him even to this day. No! thou art far better employed in casting thy crown at the feet of Him who hath redeemed thee to God by his blood. In heaven, indeed, thou canst not wear the insignia of earthly honours conferred by a grateful country;* but thou wilt for ever wave that palm of spiritual victory which Jesus, the captain of thy salvation, hath put into thine hands. Henceforth thy duty as a citizen shall no more wound thy benevolent heart, by calling on thee to distress, or cut off, thy fellow creatures. The crimes of bad men shall no more ruffle thy mind, nor the inconsistencies of the good excite thy compassion or regret. Thou shalt not weep over the sorrows of any distressed or departing friends; nor shalt thou again retire, under spiritual conflicts, to smite on thy breast, and exclaim, "O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" No! for thou hast reached the haven where thou wouldst be—thou hast entered that rest which remains for the people of God.—*There* He who sitteth on the throne hath made all things new, and God himself is thy present God, visible in the glorified person of Immanuel Jehovah Jesus. He has taken thee from the evil to come; he has wiped away all tears from thine eyes. Thou wilt

* Soon after peace was concluded, the Prince Regent conferred various honorary titles and distinctions on such naval and military officers as had particularly distinguished themselves, when Macarius, whose death had not then been officially ascertained, was made a knight companion of the military order of the Bath.

henceforth experience no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither wilt thou feel any more pain; for these were earthly evils, and in heaven are all passed away. O heaven,

“Thou sweet abode of peace and love,
Where pilgrims, freed from toil, are bless'd;
Had I the pinions of a dove,
I'd fly to thee, and be at rest.

But hush, my soul, nor dare repine;
The time thy God appoints is best;
While here to do his will be *mine*,
And *his* to fix my time of rest.”

CHAPTER XII.

“THE HEART KNOWETH HIS OWN BITTERNESS, AND
A STRANGER DOTH NOT INTERMEDDLE WITH HIS
JOY.”—PROV. xiv. 10.

ON lately reading an account of the horrors of mind which the blustering, and professed infidel *Volney* exhibited when overtaken by a storm at sea; and of his unreserved and unsolicited acknowledgment of a God, when he apprehended his death was at hand, I was brought to the recollection of some occurrences which passed when I was once a passenger on board the V—— frigate.

It was but a few months before I quitted the last ship I served in, that we and the E——, another line of battle ship, captured two brigs off the Coast of Sardinia.— On this occasion a commissioned officer, with a party of seamen from each ship, were ordered on board the captured vessels. Whether my commander really considered my services as necessary and desirable to take command of these prizes, or whether he were glad of a fair opportunity of getting rid of me for a season, and, perhaps, altogether, I cannot tell; but off I was hurried as senior officer, having the other vessel and its commander under my orders, with instructions to take the prizes to Gibraltar, and then return up the Mediterra-

near with those under my command, and join our respective ships whenever and wherever they could be fallen in with. Whatever might be my captain's motives for selecting me on this occasion, I certainly did not feel obliged to him, for, in the then state of the war, the Spanish coast swarmed with their privateers, while my two poor vessels had no means of defence, and very little capabilities for a successful flight, should we be pursued. In short, I considered it much more likely that I should visit a Spanish prison than the Bay of Gibraltar. To that God, who had hitherto always preserved me, I committed myself and my proceedings, and through his good providence we accomplished the voyage with safety and speed; when, having delivered the vessels into the charge of the prize agent, I and my brother officer of the E——, with our parties of seamen, embarked on board the V——, and in a few days sailed for our squadron to the eastward. On my arrival in this happy, dashing ship, as such frigates are generally esteemed, I was ushered into the ward-room with all the respect and politeness customary on such occasions. In the society of this ship's ward-room I found much that was pleasing, and much that was distressing; all the officers were young men of intelligent and gentlemanly manners, men of reading and cultivated minds; hence there was much more correctness of behaviour and interesting conversation among them than could be found on board of many ships in our fleet. This was a pleasure I had not anticipated; it was the fair side of a picture I had not expected to see. But this same picture had a dark and distressing side, which I was obliged

often to look upon. These young men had, by some means or other, got into a train of deistical reading, and of dangerous, half-infidel opinions. The works of Hume, Gibbon, and Voltaire formed a part of their library, and but too frequently engaged their leisure hours. At that time my thoughts and feelings on religious matters were much what they now are; consequently, it was not long before I and my new associates discovered that we viewed many things in a very opposite light to each other. This discovery was first made by the following circumstance. The junior lieutenant of the frigate had, some days before I joined them, purchased, at a very high price, what the bookseller told him was one of the most popular and sensible novels ever published in England, and that a full chest of them had happily arrived at Gibraltar. I think it was the very day I went on board, that one of the officers enquired of the purchaser, "How he liked his famous new novel?" To which the other replied, "I don't know what to think of it: there is too much of religion in it. I have read but a few pages." Hearing this odd description of a novel, and perceiving that neither the enquirer nor the owner of the work cared about reading it, I requested the favour of seeing it; and found its title, "Cœlebs in search of a Wife," and truly, it did contain much good advice and sound doctrine. To me it proved quite a treat, while it remained unread, and unvalued by the purchaser and his shipmates. This event discovered to them that they had what they termed a *religionist* among them. And I believe their surprise was accompanied with a strong curiosity to hear what I had to say on so unnautical and

unfashionable a subject as the religion interwoven with the tale of *Cælebs*.

I have remarked that the manners and language of my new associates were, for the most part, correct and gentlemanly; but in the case of the surgeon of the ship, I soon found a melancholy exception, as well as in the lieutenant, who had accompanied me from our squadron. The latter, indeed, was a man of no intelligence or information on any subject whatever, but such as were to his disgrace: he was what many hundreds of the lieutenants of the navy then were—a noisy, profane blockhead. On the other hand, the surgeon was a clever, well informed man, who could appear to much advantage in company whenever he chose; or rather he would have done so at all times, had he been under the influence of real christian principles. As it was, he combined the disgusting and interesting qualities together. The first part of the day generally found him in a sullen and half-melancholy state of mind; but in the afternoons, when a moderate portion of wine had restrung his nerves, and company and conversation had in a manner silenced the small, still voice within, he became another man, and often launched forth in all the warmth of debate in favour of daring, black infidelity, and in blasphemous denial and contempt of the Holy Scriptures, and of every truth and doctrine they contain. The book *Cælebs* having, to a certain extent, made them acquainted with my sentiments, the poor surgeon and my fellow passenger most days purposely introduced, or rather forced, religious subjects into conversation the instant the cloth was removed from the dinner table.

Their aim was, directly or indirectly, to level all at myself; while they seemed to think I was bound to answer all their nonsense and profaneness, and that it behoved me to explain away, or take upon myself all the faults and follies, real or imaginary, which they brought forward against those they called "*Methodists*," a term which, in their vocabulary, comprised individuals of all sects, parties, ranks, and ages, who feared God, and endeavoured to work righteousness. Hence every ridiculous story, and every lying report which they had either read or heard of, was brought forward to make sport at the expense of the Bible, and to prove to me that religion was all cant and hypocrisy, and that its advocates were either fools or knaves. At the close of each of these silly anecdotes and groundless reports they would appeal to me with the air of imaginary triumph, and exclaim, "There, what think you, M——s, of that?" This merriment, at the expense of the vilified and misrepresented Methodists, might have passed off without producing little else than a smile of contempt and pity, had it been the worst I unhappily had to hear: but, as the wine passed round, the surgeon's animal spirits became more buoyant, and his profaneness more satanic; while the objects of his attack were more and more sacred. The reader, by this time, must be aware, that it never was my custom to do what has been justly condemned both by land and sea, under the designation of "*cramming religion down men's throats*." On the contrary, I ever considered it extremely improper to introduce spiritual conversation, until I perceived something like a prospect of doing it with profit to my hearers,

and credit to the cause of God. As a layman, and an officer in the public service, I felt that my first great business was to endeavour to keep my own heart with all diligence, and thus to speak to others, rather by my actions and conduct than by assuming the office of the preacher. There were, however, times and occasions when it became a duty to speak out, and fearlessly and unreservedly to confess Christ Jesus before men. I need hardly say that such did present themselves more than once while I was on board the V——. It is true, that so far as my poor brainless fellow-passenger was concerned, all argument was thrown away, for he really knew not when he was confuted: and oftentimes the conversation of the surgeon was too much like that of a being labouring under the effects of a frenzied brain, to call for any reply. To the more sedate part of the company I however, at times, considered it right to address myself; but here I could go only on general and broad ground, because they knew little of, and cared less about the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel. Yet I hope even this little was not altogether in vain in the Lord. More than once or twice I brought them to acknowledge that there must be a God, the Creator of all things; that his power and rule must extend to and over all his works; that his approbation or disapprobation must mark the conduct of all his rational creatures; that reverence and gratitude were due from man to his Maker; and that the circumstance of our holding a temporary command over a portion of our fellow-creatures, could never absolve us from that humility, obedience, and love, which were, and ever must be, due to the

King of kings and Lord of lords. To this length I generally could carry my point, even in the presence of the daring, infidel surgeon, and boisterous, profane lieutenant. Not but that they both would continue to pour forth, the one his blasphemy, and the other his nonsense. At times, indeed, they seemed hurried on by a spirit of evil, to such lengths, that I considered it altogether improper to be a hearer, and on such occasions, left the table, and repaired on deck, where I could walk, and muse, and sigh over the folly and madness of the heart of man, as a mystery of iniquity, while destitute of the regenerating grace of God. The case of the surgeon much perplexed me. That a person with so much good sense as he appeared to possess, should actually be the dupe of infidelity, even unto atheism, seemed incredible. Yet, that he should so furiously profess such principles with his lips, and really not believe in them in his heart, was again what I could hardly think possible. The poet, Campbell, seems, to have, for a while, fallen into the same perplexity, when he beautifully put the question,

“ Oh, lives there, heaven! beneath thy dread expanse,
One hopeless, dark idolater of chance,
Content to feed, with pleasures unrefined,
The lukewarm passions of a lowly mind;
Who, mouldering eastward, 'reft of every trust,
In joyless union wedded to the dust,
Could all his parting energy dismiss,
And call this barren world sufficient bliss?”

And as the same page informs us, he at length came to the melancholy conclusion, that such infidels, such

atheists, were actually to be found ; for thus he proceeds, in strains as enchanting as their theme is dismal—

“ There live, alas ! of heaven-directed mein,
Of cultured soul, and sapient eye serene,
Who hail thee man ! the pilgrim of a day,
Spouse of the worm, and brother of the clay,
Frail as the leaf in Autumn’s yellow bower,
Dust in the wind, or dew upon the flower ;
A friendless slave, a child without a sire,
Whose mortal life, and momentary fire,
Lights to the grave his chance-created form,
As ocean-wrecks illuminate the storm ;
And when the gun’s tremendous flash is o’er,
To night and silence sink for evermore !”

Campbell’s Pleasures of Hope.

In reference to the poor surgeon this matter was, however, cleared up before I left them. One morning, a morning that succeeded to an afternoon of more than usual profaneness on his part, I found him, as was his general custom, pacing the deck alone, sad, and thoughtful. I went to him, and, in as kind a way as I could, I said, “S——, your conversation at the mess-table has often surprised and grieved me beyond measure, but it did especially so yesterday afternoon ; I am utterly astonished that a man of your good sense and abilities should advocate such principles, and advance such language as you are in the habit of doing.” He stopped short, looked a look of desponding melancholy in my face, and exclaimed, “M——, you are right ; the principles you maintain are true—you are on the safe side, and I am damned !” “Damned !” I replied, “why you deny in toto the very existence of hell and damnation !”

“Ah,” said he, “I know there is a hell, and that there is damnation, and I shall go to hell and be damned for ever!” Such a reply as this, uttered, as it unquestionably was, from the agonizing feelings of a guilty conscience, and a despairing state of mind, and accompanied by a look of indescribable distress, fixed me for some moments in silent amazement. His hand still resting on my shoulder—we stood and looked at each other, I in astonishment at what I had heard, and he in evident anxiety to hear what I should say in reply. Recovering myself, I resumed the conversation. “S——, your language now is as absurd, though not so criminal, as that which I before complained of! You say you know there is a hell and a future state; why then do you persist day after day in denying these truths? why endeavour to persuade others that there is no future state of rewards and punishments? Have you not constantly maintained that these things are only the dreams of silly fanatics, or the sayings of knavtsh priests?” He shook his head, and seemed in an agony, while he replied, “Ah! it is to no purpose your thus talking to me, my doom is fixed—I shall be damned!!” “No, my dear fellow,” I interrupted him, “there is mercy with God that he may be feared and relied on, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. Pray for repentance unto life, and your prayer will yet be heard. Remember Him who, while pouring out his soul unto death for sinners, cast his eyes of mercy and compassion on the ignorant, idolatrous, blaspheming Roman soldiers, and on the unthinking and profane Jews, who surrounded his cross, and mocked his sufferings; think of

Him, I say, who at such a time, and under such provocations, prayed for his revilers and persecutors, 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.' No, S——, I trust that your doom is *not* fixed, as your present troubled conscience would persuade you, but that you are still on mercy's ground; only seek the Lord, and be assured he will be found of you." Here some of the officers coming up to us broke off the conversation, and the next day, falling in with our squadron, I left the frigate and rejoined my own ship, and saw poor S—— no more; but though I saw him not again, I often had him in my thoughts, and on every such occasion I could not but say, "'The heart does indeed know its own bitterness,' does so know it, that a stranger intermeddles not with it, cannot feel or understand it like unto the sufferer himself, and of all bitterness of heart this must be the severest which springs from the rankling arrows of a wounded and despairing conscience, sinning against knowledge and conviction."

Does the reader wish to know what ultimately became of this unhappy young man? I can give him but a short and imperfect, though I believe a gratifying account. I left the frigate, as before observed, and saw no more of the blasphemer. Years had passed over my head, and changes and providences, many, merciful, and great, had at length placed me as a minister of God's word, in a secluded village in the interior of the kingdom, where the many and multiplying objects of duty, hopes, and fears, connected with my beloved but solemn work, had at length almost obliterated the remembrance of those days I once passed in poor S——'s company

on board the V—— frigate. Judge then my surprise, when on returning home after a few days absence, I learnt from the servant a confused account of a Mr. S—— having sent a message by some stranger who was travelling our way, begging my pardon and forgiveness for all the pain he had once occasioned me—that he had long wished to make this apology, but had not, until very lately, been able to trace me out; such was the servant's tale. But who this messenger was, or where Mr. S—— was then living, or in what state of mind, or of circumstances he was then to be found, were particulars concerning which I could gather nothing further for two or three years, when I learnt that a pious old naval friend of mine had been thrown on board the V—— as a passenger, not long after I left her, and that his judicious and zealous labours were blessed by the Almighty to the establishing of poor S—— in the faith and hope of the Gospel; in which renewed state of heart he returned on shore in the peace of 1814, and had commenced surgical practice in London, where my informant believed he was going on well as a follower of Christ Jesus: being convinced in his own experience, that "The heart knows its own bitterness, and that a stranger intermeddles not with its joys." Further particulars I have not been able to obtain concerning him.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ When backwards, with attentive mind,
Life’s labyrinths I trace,
I find my God, unceasing kind,
Propitious to my peace.”

ON a review of the foregoing papers, I cannot but set my seal to the truth of the above stanza, in its fullest and most literal sense; but the circumstances particularized in Chapter VI. crowd, in a more especial manner, a host of other interesting events on the mind. Time has indeed measured out a considerable space since those events took place, but memory, faithful to her office, revives them more and more distinctly.

Let me then indulge in once more turning back to the island of Minorca. It is a little spot of earth indelibly fixed on my mind, and rendered more than commonly interesting by many circumstances which occurred there.—Yes, the very sight and sound of the word Minorca recalls many pleasing and many sorrowful events. Not that I assisted in any military exploits on its shores, or acquired naval fame from any thing connected with it; but it was the spot where I once lay suspended, as it were, between eternity and time; where the balance rose and fell, and the by-stander long waited in suspense whether it would predominate on the side

of life or death. It was at Minorca, where sick and friendless, unknown and unknowing, I was left behind, a stranger in a strange land, while the calls of public duty directed both friends and companions elsewhere, and to return I knew not when. On these, as well as some other accounts yet to be noticed, I cannot think of this place with indifference.

Six years after my first return to England from the Mediterranean, or rather nine years from my first going thither, and being left at Mahon hospital, I again visited that part of the world, and Port Mahon in particular.* What a variety of mercies, providences, and judgments, did I not witness and partake of between these two periods! Yet the events connected with my first and last visits at this moment seem to be equally distinct, and almost as the transactions of the last month! so short, so fleeting does time in the retrospect appear! and so rapidly do the various cares and enjoyments, the troubles and comforts of life, succeed each other, while their days return no more.

Standing now on the downward side of the central arch of the bridge of life, and looking back on the rise as well as on the declivity already traversed, I cannot but admire the force and beauty with which the wise

* Port Mahon is a principal harbour in the island of Minorca, in the centre of which is a small rocky island, whereon a naval hospital has long been built. This port has ever afforded considerable relief to our fleets employed on the blockade of Toulon, &c. The French, British, and Spaniards, have been its successive possessors. At the time of my last visit, it was, and has ever since continued, in the hands of the last unhappy people.

man has painted the instability and fleeting nature of all sublunary things, and take up his words and say, "All these are passed away like a shadow, and as a post that hasteth by; and as a ship that passeth over the waves of the water, which, when it is gone by, the trace thereof cannot be found, neither the pathway of the keel in the waves; or, as when a bird hath flown through the air, there is no token of her way to be found, but the light air, being beaten with the stroke of her wings, and parted with the violent noise and motion of them, is passed through, and therein afterwards no sign where she went is to be found; or like as when an arrow is shot at a mark, it parteth the air, which immediately cometh together again, so that a man cannot know where it went through: even so we, in like manner, as soon as we were born, began to draw to our end."

This however is but an additional call to devote the present hour to God, and by meditation, prayer, and praise, to endeavour to draw improvement from the exercise. We cannot recall the days of past times, whose sun is gone down, and whose seasons are for ever ended; but we may "turn back the attentive mind their labyrinths to trace," and it will be our own fault if the retrospect do not furnish abundant matter wherewith to approach the throne of God; to approach it in such a manner as may be profitable to our own souls. For myself, I may surely say, when I recollect what darkness overshadowed my mind, what carnality reigned in my heart on first visiting Port Mahon, and even when I quitted the hospital; I have on the one hand abundant cause to implore forgiveness, and equal cause on the

other to praise that long forbearing and insulted mercy which did not cut me off in such a state—a state wherein there was no love to God, no desire of the knowledge of his ways. Some fear of his wrath, indeed, was found within me, so long as its threatenings were visibly suspended over my head. But no sooner were these threatenings withdrawn, than my fears and reverence of their author withdrew also.

It has already been observed, that at the expiration of one month from being put on shore, I again embarked. For just at that time the E—— unexpectedly returned to complete her water and provisions; which having accomplished, she again sailed, and for three years continued to traverse the Mediterranean, on various services and through various fortunes, until our return to England, as noticed in the conclusion of Chapter VI.

Had I been permitted to follow the bent of my own perverse inclinations, I should not have rejoined the E——. For during her absence I had formed a wild and preposterous plan, and cherished the unaccountable desire of embarking on board a strange ship; where, to say the least, the Village Sermons would never have fallen in my way—where many great and important links in the chain of divine providence would have been marred or stricken off—where, in short, I should have altogether fled from my own mercies. But the preventing, as well as the preserving, goodness of God was about me; and on this, as on many other occasions, I soon perceived,

“Where I had plann’d great cause was there
My plan’s defeat to bless.”

No sooner was the arrival of my ship announced than the physician, fearful of a relapse, ordered me on board. Two days afterwards a favourable breeze bore us in slow and easy pace out of the harbour. I looked back on the building under whose roof I had experienced so much pain of body and terror of mind, and did not regret my departure from a place, the very exterior view of which harrowed up a train of uneasy thoughts. O how little did I then think, that after nine years' absence, after nine years of mercies and judgments, I should again enter that haven with views and sentiments so different to those I then possessed!—Of the difference of these sentiments and views the reader will be a competent judge, when he bears in mind that my second course of visits were all within the last fifteen months of my naval career, and the very last of them but a few weeks before the total suppression of our little religious assemblies on board the C——.

Having been employed on different services at Lisbon, Cadiz, Teneriffe, &c. we were ordered to reinforce the fleet off Toulon. From thence (after some months beating about) we were sent, with the majority of the other ships, to Port Mahon to victual, water, and partially refit. Then it was I first met the dear departed Macarius and his honourable friend Eugenius.—We had exchanged some letters at sea, but had not enjoyed a personal interview until we came into Port Mahon, a place, even on that account alone, more than commonly interesting. But, independent of this circumstance, it was a place where all the powerful, the pleasing, and

the afflicting consequences of the association of ideas were most fully experienced.

It was a stormy autumnal day, when we entered the haven; the sky lowered with black clouds, and the sudden gusts of wind from time to time rushed down the well remembered hills in wild fury on the oppressed vessel, leaving a momentary calm between them, only to renew their assaults with greater violence. And such, I thought, (as I gained sight of the well-known hospital building,) and such was the state of my mind, when nine years ago I turned my aching limbs on your couches, and gazed on your dreary walls, and thought on death! I felt some gratitude for the change which had taken place since that period, as well as much joy in the prospect of becoming better acquainted with Macarius and Eugenius. Nor was it long ere all my anticipations were for once more than realized. There was a union of hearts between us which soon did away the formalities of the world and the natural shyness of strangers. We passed all our leisure time together principally on shore. Sometimes we rambled over the barren rugged hills, and sometimes through the more fertile and refreshing vallies—nor do I hesitate to say, that these rambles, these seasons, stolen as they were from the noise and confusion of nautical duty, and from the invidious eye of man, made up some of the most pleasing and happy portions of time I had then experienced. As such I esteemed them then, and as such I look back on them at this day. The world, and the things of the world, had necessarily much of our time, and this heightened our enjoyment of every little respite

and deliverance from its contentions.—Yes, these were precious seasons ; when for an hour or two, abstracted from the cares, and almost forgetting the concerns of earth, we discoursed with freedom and unreserve of the things of heaven.

Solomon has observed, that “as iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend;” and I think the effect of our interviews at Minorca was strikingly illustrative of the justness of his observation. The oftener we met and parted, the more we wished to meet again: the more we discoursed, the closer were our hearts drawn together in that bond of christian friendship which death cannot dissolve, and which eternity will not do away.

On these occasions we never wanted for subjects of conversation, nor did we discourse much on any but those which had a tendency to glorify God and benefit man.—Sweet and interesting seasons ! not again to recur below, but I hope they are to be remembered, and to be enjoyed, when mortality is swallowed up of life.

In those rambles, as we ascended from the vallies, and gained the summit of now one hill and now another, we beheld the spacious harbour stretching itself beneath us. In its centre the hospital island and its building reared themselves into a sort of watch-tower, while over its whole surface were seen scattered the different ships and all their accompanying boats and vessels, busily employed in fresh preparations to combat the storms of the sea and the violence of the enemy. From these heights, and with such objects before us, it was almost impossible for me not to revert to former times, and

point out to my friends the spot where I once lay a sort of outcast from God and man. Nor were my more private excursions on the water less interesting to myself than those on the land. To sail round the hospital Island, or to row by its rugged base, and to track the path which, as a convalescent, I had often trod, when supported on a staff I measured and re-measured, with feeble faltering steps, the extent of this little coast—to mark the rock-stones on which, faint and exhausted, I often sat down to rest—to survey the point from which my deranged comrade was about to take the fatal leap*—to see the cavern into which the bodies of so many brave men had, in the prime and flower of life, been conveyed previous to their interment, and into which three of my accompanying shipmates had been carried—all this I found not only interesting, but useful, and well calculated to rouse the mind, and lift it up to God in David's words, "Lord, what am I, or what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me thus far?"

From contemplating these objects, I now and then directed my eyes to the eastern and opposite side of the

* The first who died of those who accompanied me to sick quarters, in the paroxysm of his fever, and in that supernatural strength which delirium often supplies, leaped out of bed before the nurses were in attendance, quitted the ward, and ran to the side of the cliff, where he vociferously called on his ship, (then many miles away) to send a boat and take him on board. Finding no voice to answer, or any boat to approach, he was on the point of leaping into the sea, when one of the centinels arrived and caught him, and thus prolonged his earthly existence for the short space of twenty-four hours; for at the expiration of that time he died.

harbour, where still remained the solitary inclosure which has long been the general burying-place for British and all other protestant subjects. Hither the poor Roman Catholic natives (tutored and deceived by their bigoted and political priests) have conveyed the supposed heretics who died at the hospital, and interred them with as little sympathy as they would have earthed over a dead beast. O! ye British mothers, and wives, and sisters! happy for you that ye never witnessed the insults offered to the remains of those whom ye once called your sons, and brothers, and husbands!

I know all our little civilities and kind attentions to the deceased are alike unavailing, both to body and soul; but I would not have them omitted, much less would I have the remains of what were once man treated with such barbarity as the protestant dead are sure to receive at the hands of a Spaniard, an Italian, or a Portuguese.

Such treatment is to the best feelings of the heart what the rude hand of the sullen maniac would be on the strings of a well-tuned harp. Nor can there be any more of the genuine and lovely spirit of Christianity in the one, than of well-adjusted and soothing harmony in the other.

But we may hope the dawn of better times is at hand.—Neither is it to me the least interesting circumstance connected with Minorca, that I was permitted to be the harbinger of good tidings of salvation to many. For at Port Mahon I had the happiness and the honour of distributing the first fifty Testaments that had ever appeared in the language of the people in that island—yes, I will say the honour;—for if I were enabled to per-

form this work in an acceptable spirit before God, the angels in heaven will consider it as a work infinitely more honourable than the conquest of fifty cities, and the boon itself as far surpassing in real value the collected riches of fifty kingdoms.

But I hasten to conclude this chapter. For however interesting the events alluded to in it may be to myself, I cannot expect them to afford that interest to others—I will therefore only observe, that this was the last place touched at in the Mediterranean by the ship in which I took my passage home. The want of water occasioned our anchoring off the harbour for two or three days: but as my health was ill calculated for shore exercise, and having neither duty to perform, friends to see, nor Testaments to distribute, I remained on board. When the anchor was weighed, I bid a final adieu to Minorca, with no small portion of those feelings usually connected with the idea of for ever leaving a place where many either of the adverse or pleasing events of life have occurred.

As the ship increased her sail and quickened her flight, I looked back, and from time to time beheld the receding island sinking into the horizon as a thin cloud on the edge of the waters. Had the place afforded opportunity of giving vent to my full heart, I think it would have dictated the following words; “Farewell, Minorca, farewell!—to me thou hast proved the land of mercy and of judgment—on thy circumscribed shores I have tasted the sweets of christian friendship, and within thy limits I have trembled under the alarms of a troubled mind—within thy sheltering harbour I have

joined the scoffer and profane, there I have held sweet communion in praise and prayer with those who feared God—in thy fields and in thy streets I have witnessed the eager desire of thy benighted sons and daughters to obtain the word of God, to possess that living bread which comes down from heaven; and with thy hungering and thirsting children I have left some portions of that word, which is able to make them wise unto salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.—Adieu, Minorca, adieu! Henceforth thou wilt see my face no more for ever! For I go to dwell in a far distant, a far happier, and more enlightened land. But O, thou bounteous Giver of all good, hasten the time when missionaries and ministers after thine own heart shall preach and expound that word which thou hast commissioned thine unworthy servant to leave with this people.—O send forth instruments who shall feed them with knowledge and understanding, until Minorca shall be numbered with the ‘isles that wait upon thee and trust in thy name.’ “O God of all power and might, reform her idolatrous church; instruct and sanctify her priests, and lead, enlighten, and bless her people, for Jesus Christ, our Redeemer’s sake!”

CHAPTER XIV.

“CAST THY BREAD UPON THE WATERS; FOR THOU SHALT FIND IT AFTER MANY DAYS.—ECCLES xi. 1.

MANY good men are deterred from exertion in their allotted posts and paths of duty, under a very common suggestion of the enemy of souls, that it is useless for them, with their limited abilities, and in their contracted, and, perhaps, humble sphere, to expect any good can arise, or any fruit be found. Nor are men of moderate abilities the only individuals who experience this temptation: it is a snare laid in the way of almost every man, and which more or less paralyzes many of their best hopes and exertions. In my own case I can truly say, that I have been held back from promptly setting about a hundred important duties, which at times I might, and ought at once to have attempted, instead of delaying the time, encouraging fears, and going to work, at last, like one who was only half persuaded that the attempt was worth making. Moreover, while such has been the case, with respect to many duties actually attempted, many, alas! have been hitherto quite delayed; and now they can never be set about; for the time, the means, the circumstances, and the individuals either no longer exist, or are removed far beyond my influence and reach. How salutary, how seasonable then is that admonition,

“Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.” And how encouraging are these assurances; “that the Lord doth not despise the day of small things,”—that “our labors shall not be in vain in Him whose strength is perfected in our weakness; and who putteth his treasure into earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be seen to be of God and not of man:”—who, while he hath bidden us “not to be weary in well doing,” hath positively said, “we shall reap if we faint not;” who hath directed us to “cast our bread upon the waters,” with the assurance that “we shall find it after many days.” Many a time has the retrospect of gone-by days brought to remembrance another and another instance of the Lord’s faithfulness to these his promises; at once to rebuke my unbelief and despondency, and to urge me on to attempt something further, as times and opportunities presented something more to be done. Let us then indulge in that retrospect for a little while, and take a glance at some few circumstances, not noticed in the preceding pages. It may, through the divine blessing, stir up both the writer’s and the reader’s heart to go forth hereafter, and “cast our bread upon the waters in some confidence of hope, that we shall find it after many days.”

In the course of my ministerial labours the Lord has, notwithstanding all my fears and hesitations in the path of duty, favoured me with not a few instances, in proof, that he is a promise-making and promise-fulfilling God. I will, however, select one, and only one, from this field, and then turn back again to sea-faring scenes and characters for further illustrations.

There is an ancient farm-house standing on the distant confines of my parish, whither I had once very often gone to visit a poor young woman, named Charlotte S——s; who, after suffering much and long under a pulmonary consumption, departed triumphing, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. Some three years after her happy departure, I one day received a message from one of the survivors of the family, requesting me to call on a sister of the deceased, who had lately been sent home from a distant place of service very ill. On arriving at the house I found the subject of my visit was most seriously indisposed; she was, in reality, in the last stage of the same complaint of which Charlotte had previously died. There is something distressing to human nature in the contemplation of this insidious and fatal disease, as its ravages are generally most extensive and severe among the rising generation; oftentimes seizing on the most interesting and lovely portion of our young people, and that, too, when and where the fond friends and relatives had been calculating on many years of health and strength to come. Oh, how many of these instances have I witnessed among my flock, my friends, and acquaintance! But to return to Sophia, for such was her name; perceiving that her sun was hastening to go down, I proceeded to enquire into her views and her prospects, her hopes and fears, as connected with life, death, and eternity—of her state of preparation for that change, when the body must return to the dust from whence it was taken, and the soul into his presence who gave it—a task this, whatever the reader may think of it, which is often attended with much difficulty and deep

anxiety; requiring, as it does, the exercise of much discretion, tenderness, and christian faithfulness. In Sophia's case, however, these difficulties and anxieties were but little felt; for I found her mind well informed on scriptural subjects, and her foundation of hope built on Christ Jesus, as "the only rock and name given under heaven whereon and whereby man can build and be saved." In short, I found her in possession of such a good hope, through grace, that she was enabled calmly and cheerfully to look forward to her dissolution, as an event which she knew could not be far off. In the course of conversation, I enquired how long, and by what means, her mind had been brought into a train of serious, christian reflections and practice? when she replied, "Ever since you, Sir, conversed with me and the family one day when you visited dear Charlotte, not long before she died." "Indeed," said I, "I don't now recollect any thing particular as to that circumstance." "Perhaps not, Sir; but I have never forgotten it. I had obtained leave of absence to come home for a day or two before Charlotte was quite gone; and during that time you called to see her. On leaving her room, you staid a short time, and conversed with us who were below, on the subject of the shortness and uncertainty of human life. I was then in good health, but, Sir, don't you remember, you turned and said to me, 'It is very probable you may never reach your twenty-fifth year?'" "I think I do now recollect something of that circumstance, but what of that?" I answered. "Why, Sir, these were the words which made the first serious impression on my mind. I went to my place of service

the next day; and soon after that Charlotte died, and went to heaven; but your words were, from time to time, coming afresh to my recollection. It is now three years ago, but these words have been on my mind almost continually; they led me, through the blessing of God, to reflect, and read, and pray; they led me to seek that Saviour, who came to seek and to save lost sinners."

I told her I was thankful to God for such his mercy to her, and for his condescending grace in blessing any thing that I had said or done. With a smile of sweet christian gratitude and faith, she replied, "Yes, Sir; and now your words will certainly prove true. You said, 'It was very probable that I should never reach my twenty-fifth year:' I am now only twenty-three, and I shall soon be gone."

Thus ended my first visit, and in a very few weeks Sophia was numbered with those dead who have died in the Lord and are blessed. While that work which eventually ended in her everlasting salvation, had its commencement in the way above described, namely, by the divine blessing going with one short and simple sentence, uttered at the time without a moment's premeditation, and thought of no more until three years afterwards, when it was recalled to my remembrance by the individual who had received the benefit! Here then we see, that "bread cast upon the waters," even in the smallest portions, and in a way that scarcely leaves room to expect any beneficial result, may, by and by, be found to the glory of God, and to the good of some of the numerous family of mankind.

The next illustration will appear in the sequel of John P——'s humble history. John was one of our best fore-castle seamen on board his Majesty's ship C——r, but, like many others, he was as profane and ignorant as a heathen. Our little religious meetings had gone on in the *wing** and elsewhere for more than two years before he quitted the ship; but never had he come near any of them. While he attended well to his duty as a seaman, he was totally unconcerned about his soul, and seemed to have neither a thought, nor hope, nor fear as to its salvation or condemnation. Thus things went on with him until the Lord arrested his downward progress, first by afflicting his body, and then by convincing his soul of sin. The first of these visitations was by his receiving a very serious hurt in the prosecution of his usual duty in the ship, which rendered it necessary to send him on shore to the naval hospital at Gosport. As the ship was lying at Spithead at the time of the accident, and it is customary to send a commissioned officer with the sick or wounded, I was directed to take him to the hospital. I have not the slightest recollection of any thing in particular which passed on that occasion, nor should I, in all probability, ever have recalled one circumstance connected with that event, had not John himself, several years afterwards, found out my present residence, and called to obtain a certificate to establish his servitude in the navy, and his fair character as a good seamen while we sailed together. It so happened that I was from home the first time he

* See Chapter VIII.

called; so that he amused the inmates of my house with a much fuller account of old times, and of my various doings on board the C——r than he would have been allowed to do had I myself been present. As it was, however, his straight-forward simple tale, which, by the bye, was only the truth, gained full credit with those who listened to it: and while he told them many a ditty of storms, and wounds, and battles that he had shared in, they cheered him with kind words and some necessary refreshment. But the most interesting part of all he had to say was, how the Lord had in great mercy brought him to a sense of his sins, and made him acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom he was trusting for salvation through faith in his blood. And here it appeared that what passed between him and me on our way from the ship to the hospital had been owned of God to begin that work which from that time forward had gone on and made poor John a new creature. From his own account, it seems that I called his attention to the many mercies and long forbearance of the Almighty towards him in his many and great preservations amidst sundry kinds of deaths: and that next I warned him against hardening his heart to this last, and loud-speaking providence, which, while it had wounded his limbs, had yet spared his life. And lastly, it seems that I entreated him to call on the Lord Jesus as on one able and willing to save to the uttermost all who fly to him for pardon for the past, and grace for the future. This, from his own account, was the substance of what passed in the boat just before he was left behind, and I saw him no more until several winters and summers

had passed over our heads, and he was truly born again, even when he had become old! I need here add no more than to say, that he obtained the certificate he came for, and the pension he was seeking at the Admiralty; and that by a subscription among some friends, he was enabled to purchase a wherry on the Thames, where he has for some time past been very usefully employed as an agent of one of the Societies established for the moral and religious instruction of our seamen. Surely this is another illustration of our motto, "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."

Before I lay down my pen, I may perhaps, be allowed to say, that John P—— was always a good specimen of our old, and commonly called, *hard-weather* English seamen, who, from having been all their lifetime at sea, or on ship board, have but few words in which to clothe their ideas or express themselves on general topics, unless it be in sea phrases and nautical comparisons. This was and still is, peculiarly the case with honest John P——, although he has for some years been a resident on shore, and a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Full well does he know what religion in the heart means, for this kingdom of God is within him; but he cannot go far in expressing his feelings and knowledge of this glorious transformation, in what he would term, *a shore-going way*. There is, however, a simplicity of manner, and a force and propriety, in his nautical prayers and conversation which have surprised every man of intelligence who has heard him, and is acquainted with the literal signification of John's vocab-

ulary. A gentleman who was once present, gave me an account of what passed; as, on that occasion, my name and former humble proceedings were introduced into John's prayer. This took place one old year's day, when he and several other pious seamen, with some landsmen, agreed to keep what is called a *watch-night*, that is, to sit up until the old year is gone out and the new one come in, on which occasions the individuals unite in singing, reading of Scripture, and praising God for all his mercies through the various stages of the year about to expire, and then they commence the new year in actual prayer and supplication for his mercy and grace to go with them through the days that may yet be added to their earthly pilgrimage. In these simple, primitive, and edifying exercises, it is customary for several individuals to take a part. On the occasion here alluded to, it came, in the course of their little service, to John's turn to give out a psalm or hymn, and then to engage in prayer, which, my informant assured me, he did with the seriousness of a patriarch, and the simplicity of a little child. This gentleman assured me, that John's whole soul appeared absorbed in penitence, in gratitude, and love to God; so that he seemed utterly unmindful of any one's presence, save His unto whom he was now addressing himself in confession of sins committed, and in thanksgivings for mercies received. Often his full heart caused his eyes literally to flow down with tears. But it was the peculiarity of his language, and the simplicity of his mixture of confession, supplication, and a sort of conversation with God, while on his knees, which exhibited, so strikingly, the character-

istics of a poor pious sailor's devotions. Weeping like a child, the old hero of many a hard-fought battle, exclaimed, "O Lord, I am a poor vile, ignorant sinner, not worthy to call on thy name. Lord, I have many times, at this season of the year, sat up to drink, and curse, and swear the old year out, and the new year in, with my shipmates. Yes, Lord, I did so when I belonged to the C——r. There we sat in the galley most of the night sinning against thee. Lord, I did so when thy dear servant Mr. M—— belonged to our ship. O Lord! thou knowest how that dear man was willing to take us poor sailors in tow for heaven. Lord, thou knowest how he often hailed us, but I would not answer him; no, nor even throw a rope. O Lord, forgive me, and do thou bless his soul now and for ever." Should this recital induce a smile, oh! let it not be one of contempt at poor John's simple prayer, which, I doubt not, ascended to heaven, and entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Rather let the reader contemplate the case of a vessel lost in error, as to the courses she has long been steering, and unacquainted with her present latitude and longitude. Let him consider this vessel overtaken, dismasted, and almost overwhelmed by a storm; then let him realise to his mind some friendly ship bearing down to her relief, anxious and willing, if possible, to take her in tow; but all these friendly intentions are defeated; for the besotted crew will neither answer the repeated calls made to them, nor even exert themselves to throw a small line on board the friendly ship to receive a tow rope from those who are desirous of rendering assistance. When the reader has proceeded thus far he will, though

a landsman, have a clue by which he may interpret poor John's simple and undisguised confession of his past conduct, and understand, in a small degree, how expressive and to the purpose are many sea terms and nautical phrases, when used by real seamen. O how often has the Saviour of men beheld us like this poor bewildered, dismasted vessel, ready to sink into eternity, without the knowledge of our situation, and without power or will to help ourselves? And how often has he *borne down* in mercy, and asked "Why will ye die?" How often would he have gathered us, as a hen her brood under her wings; but, like John P——, we would not hear, nor answer, nor make the least effort to flee from the wrath to come, or to lay hold on eternal life. "He would oftentimes have taken us in tow, but we would not even throw a rope." Let the trifler smile at John's confession, but let me ever take it up, and repeat it for myself, to the praise of that mercy which did not leave me or poor John to perish in our ignorance, ingratitude, and stupidity.

CHAPTER XV.

“CAST THY BREAD UPON THE WATERS; FOR THOU
SHALT FIND IT AFTER MANY DAYS.—ECCLES xi. 1.

To proceed with some additional illustrations of our motto, I may here observe, that few persons, who are unconnected with our navy, can be aware of the great difference that runs through all the interior of different ships composing the same fleet or squadron. In fact, it is in ships as in houses, two of the latter may comprise a part of the same terrace, and in all respects of size and building may be the exact counterpart of each other, while every thing within them, as to comfort, regularity, intelligence, and morality, may be as opposite as possible. So it is in ships of the same fleet, and size, and rating on the navy list. In one, the visitor who possesses correct principles, and a well informed mind, may find many things to interest his best feelings, and command his esteem; while, in the other, he will hear and see little else than what is calculated to excite his pity or contempt. To confine myself, however, to one particular, it may be stated, that the young gentlemen-volunteers, and midshipmen, are so watched over by the captain and commissioned officers, and so trained up in general and professional knowledge on board of some ships, as to bid fair for their one day becoming

intelligent and useful members of society, as well on shore as afloat. While in other ships these young candidates for fame and hard service, are permitted to run wild, to grow up in such ignorance and profaneness, as to become a disgrace to their superiors, and a clog, if not an absolute curse, to the navy, and to society in general—at least, such was the case when I was among them.

On joining the ship to which I was appointed lieutenant after the close of the battle of Trafalgar, all the distinctions above pointed out rushed on me with a force I had never expected to realize. Times had been, when I was disposed to indulge a murmur at what I thought unnecessary strictness and order—now I blessed my lot that I had been so ruled and trained up: but it was a melancholy task to look round, and draw the comparison between the ship I had left, and the one into which I had been promoted. As a young officer, entering on such responsibilities as then involved and surrounded me, I should have rejoiced to have had the advice and example of older and more talented comrades; but here I found myself destitute, altogether, of such advantages, and surrounded by a crew of seamen, and a number of petty officers, who, for the most part, were a compound of ignorance and ill behaviour. As to the midshipmen, they seemed to have been long left to themselves; no superior officer appeared to regard them with the least interest. They were any thing but what those I had left behind me were. Among these young lads on board my new ship there was one, whose fatherless and friendless situation called forth my sympathies beyond the

others. His appearance and behaviour were ill suited to those of a person who was expected, one day, to fill a post of responsibility and honour as a public man. Who had introduced him into the ship I never knew—one thing was clear, that none of the officers interested themselves about him; and that he was growing up in ignorance, untidiness, and ill behaviour. But as this was more his misfortune than his fault, I determined, stranger as I was among them, to make some little attempt for his good. To this end I ordered him, often much against his own will, to come to my cabin, where I set him to work at reading, writing, and arithmetic; endeavouring, from day to day, to impress his mind with a conviction, that, next to the blessing of God's providence, he must look to, and depend on his own exertions to get forward in the world, and to rise in the navy; as he had not the advantages of rich or influential relatives to help him on. How long I continued my office of tutor I cannot now tell, nor have I any recollection when and why this youth left the C——r, though I think it was before I quitted that ship. But at all events, amidst the varying scenes and duties that crowded into my succeeding months and years, I had nearly altogether forgotten the circumstance of having been once so employed; and, certainly, I had never indulged any sanguine hopes or expectations of these little labours producing any effects, or leading to any results worth mentioning. But here again I was happily disappointed.

It was not until after the general peace, and at a time when I was busily employed in my village ministerial

avocations, snug in a retreat which few of my old friends and companions had discovered, that I received a letter full of good sense and moral feeling, and overflowing with grateful acknowledgments of my past kindness and attentions. For a while I read on, and knew not what it all meant; or who it was that thus felt himself obliged to me; until, at length, the writer informed me, that he had the honour of holding a commission in His Majesty's navy, and that he considered all his then respectability and future prospects as resulting from the advice and instructions he had received from me—in the absence of which he believed that he never could have been prepared to advance from the situation in which I found him on board the C——r.

In the feelings which dictated that letter, my poor services were unquestionably over-rated; yet, had they never been rendered, it is most probable, partly from the youth's own disinclination at that time to mental application, as well as from his unfitness to advance without assistance, that the time might have for ever gone by in which the work required to be done must be accomplished, if done at all. For aught I know to the contrary, this gentleman is now living, and may one day command a ship of the line and become a British Admiral. Let my readers then "Cast their bread upon the waters," as they have an opportunity, believing that it shall be found after many days.

With one more instance, I will conclude these illustrations, not because I have no more to add, but because these will be quite sufficient to our purpose. Having,

in the year 1808, arrived at Spithead, and effected a hasty refit of our rigging, and obtained a supply of provisions and stores for foreign service, we embarked Admiral B—— and his suite for Lisbon, where his flag ship awaited him, as commander on that station. On this occasion several officers went out with the Admiral, among whom was his chaplain, the Rev Mr. T——, a gentlemanly, intelligent person, with whom I very soon formed an intimacy, and found it a pleasure to accommodate him with what little advantages my cabin afforded. When I first learnt that a chaplain was to be among the passengers who, for a time, would partake at our mess-table, I certainly felt no small regret; for, from the specimens which I had seen of these gentlemen, I had good reason to fear we should have an associate who would discredit himself and his profession, and hurl contempt on every thing like real religion. But in this instance my apprehensions were not realized: Mr. T—— did not appear in danger of being ranked with *Methodists* or *saints*, as the world contemptuously denominates all who really fear and love God, but his whole conduct was that of a gentleman who respected himself, and who obtained due respect from others. I soon observed, that the officers who accompanied him, indulged in no improper levities where he was present, while, on the other hand, he was ever ready and able to promote or join in sensible, interesting conversation on general subjects. During the passage, which was a tedious one, he and I passed a good deal of time together in my cabin; but I could never get him to enter into conversation on decidedly scriptural religion, or the vital

parts of Christianity. Still he was an agreeable companion on ship-board; and many a pleasing ramble I took with him in and about Lisbon after we arrived in the Tagus. One little event, however, produced a coolness between us, or rather, as I thought, broke up our mutual kindly feelings for ever in this world. About a week before we sailed for Cadiz Bay, he put a little elegantly bound volume into my hands, saying, "Here, M——, is a little book, which I have great pleasure in lending you, as I believe you will be much pleased with its contents." The next day I caught a leisure hour to examine its pages. The subject was "*Death*, metaphysically and philosophically considered." I thought the subject rather an odd one; or, more correctly speaking, that it was oddly treated. Having myself, for the last four years, been in the habit of considering death through the medium of the Word of God, without the aid of metaphysics or philosophy, and believing then, as I believe now, that mine was the only pure and competent source to learn all that can be learnt, and all that behoves us to know on this subject, I did not expect so much gratification from the perusal of the work in hand as my friend T—— had imagined would be the case; and truly I can say, that the further I read the less I was interested, and the more I was surprised and disgusted. The fact is, my elegant little book was a mass of Jesuitical deism, and evasion, and denial of the Holy Scriptures. Before I had got half way through it, I found that its author had the folly and insolence to declare, that all such after consequences of death, as the eternal punishment of the impenitent clearly and repeatedly stated in

Holy Writ, were altogether unphilosophical, unreasonable, and unjust! This was more than enough to determine my opinion of the work; and away I threw it out of my hands—an act, which the metaphysical and philosophical student will probably consider as unpardonable. I could not, however, thus readily free my mind from a load of perplexity which burdened it. Not that the gilded trash and poison I had been reading had, in the smallest degree, discomposed or unsettled my former views of death in all its characters and consequences; but I was utterly confounded when I endeavoured to account for its owner putting such a book into my hands, with such a recommendation. “Can T—— really believe these essays? Is the doctrine of this book the creed of him who has signed and solemnly declared his belief in the Articles and Liturgy of the Church of England? Can this man, who at his ordination declared his ‘unfeigned belief in all the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament,’ believe in this book, which denies all the most fundamental doctrines of God’s Word?” Thus I reasoned with myself. Again I said, “Has not T—— declared himself inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon himself the office and administration of a christian pastor—and that he thinks himself truly called according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the office of the ministry, to serve God for the promoting of his glory, and the edification of his people?*” What then can I think of his thus approving and recommending such a work as this

* See the Church Ordination Service.

I have thrown out of my hands? Is it possible that he can be an infidel at heart, while he is a minister of the Gospel by profession?" My whole soul revolted against coming to this conclusion, and yet I knew not what to think.

I had occasionally heard of the melancholy *biblical* ignorance of many of our mathematical, classical, and metaphysical students at Oxford and Cambridge; hence I tried to think it possible, that after all my friend had said in commendation of this book, he really was not aware of the principles of poison it contained, nor sufficiently versed in the Scriptures, to see the entire disagreement between the two. It was very difficult to bring my mind to this conclusion; but as I had no alternative between considering him an infidel wolf in ministerial clothing, or a professor of divinity very little acquainted with the Word of God, I clung to the latter as my resting-point. Then arose the no-easily decided question, "What step ought I to take?" Whether I should civilly return his book without any comment whatever; or whether I should send it back, accompanied with my reasons for disapproving its contents. To do the first seemed disingenuous and unmanly, while the second would look like assuming the teacher towards one who, in literary attainments, was greatly my superior—a step that would expose me to the charge of vanity and presumption, and alienate a man whom I wished to respect and include among my friends. At length, however, I determined on this step, and to point out, with as much delicacy and tenderness as I possibly could, consistent with truth and quotations from the

Bible, why I could not approve of a work he esteemed and recommended to my notice. My epistle was rather a long one, but I endeavoured to make it as acceptable as I could. During the few days we afterwards remained in the Tagus I waited with some interest for the arrival of an answer to my semi-theological communication; but no such answer made its appearance. We then sailed for Cadiz, and, for several months, were on the coast of Spain, within the reach of correspondence, had T—— felt disposed to write; this, however, he evidently did not, and I concluded, that I had displeased him; but whether he were the infidel I feared, or the scripturally ignorant clergyman I had tried to believe, I had no means of learning until a period when I least of all expected to be made acquainted with the fact. In short, I never heard any thing of him until I myself had been some considerable time in the ministry. It was then that I was privileged with this additional testimony, that “bread cast upon the waters is found after many days.” Mr. T——, by some means, had found out my retreat, and he wrote to me such a letter as the christian reader will easily believe was of no common interest. This epistle briefly informed me of the outline of his history during the years that had passed since we separated at Lisbon to the time of his addressing me; in which it appeared, that many changes and trials had chequered his lot, and that not a few bit- ters had been mingled in his cup. He had, in the space of that time, quitted the navy—entered on ministerial labours in the spiritual charge of a parish—married a wife, and become the father of several children—and

death, the solemn subject of his once deistical and favourite book, had broken repeatedly into the circle of his family, and children and relatives had been followed to the grave. Thus he had often been called upon to contemplate its approach, and to witness its execution, not metaphysically and philosophically, but practically, so as to know and feel, that if his consolations were not derived from the doctrines of the Gospel, they would never be found from deistical philosophy and metaphysics.

All this interested my mind and called forth my sympathies not a little; but there was one more interesting detail behind, namely, that he was now become a preacher of, and theoretically and practically acquainted with, that Gospel of which he acknowledged in his letter he was extremely ignorant at the time we associated together; and lastly, that it was the letter I wrote to him when I returned the book of which he was now grieved that ever he should have recommended to my perusal, which, in the hands of God, was the beginning of that great change which he trusted had passed on his understanding and his heart. It appeared by his letter, that on receiving my communication, his pride was, indeed, hurt, that a naval officer should enter on the task, and succeed in it too, of exhibiting his ignorance of divinity. His conscience became alarmed that he should, not through infidelity, but ignorance of the Bible, have approved of a work which I had unanswerably proved to be in direct opposition to that Gospel of which he was the professed disciple and teacher. Thus did the Lord begin to open the eyes of his under-

standing, and prepare him for those afflictions and duties to which, after a season, he was to be called; and in the midst of which he was engaged when he made known to me the above particulars. Here again we see how the mercies and grace of God do now, as well as in former ages, illustrate his holy word; that the most important results are frequently produced by very small, and apparently insignificant means. There were times, both before and after I quitted the navy, when I recollected my former intercourse with this gentleman; but little did I think or know what the Author of all grace had begun to do, or was then doing in Mr. T——'s heart. I, indeed, felt thankful that I had delivered my own soul by the step I had taken; but I never indulged the most distant hope or expectation of such consequences following it.

CHAPTER XVI.

“FOR SO IS THE WILL OF GOD, THAT WITH WELL DOING YE MAY PUT TO SILENCE THE IGNORANCE OF FOOLISH MEN.”—1 PET. ii. 15.

WHILE our blessed Lord, on all occasions, instructed his followers in the duties which would devolve on them in their various circumstances and situations of life, he warned them of those trials which must come, not merely from the open and bitter hostility of the carnal heart, but from the ignorance and prejudice of men's minds, as to the nature of gospel truths, and the real sentiments and character of his disciples. While the latter will feel and say, “The time past of our lives may suffice to have wrought the will of the Gentiles,” the former will think it strange, that any alteration in our views, our taste, and practice, should have taken place; they will wonder how it is, that we no longer run with them to the same excess of riot and folly, speaking evil of us, as being either crazy, or on the point of becoming so. Of all this, I had much more experience, during the last three years I wore the naval uniform, than I have had during all the time I have been in the ministry. Religion on board a ship, and especially among the officers, was then far more un-

common than I hope and trust it will ever be again. With my own shipmates things went on pretty well, because they had the means of knowing, that I was neither turned fool, nor gone mad, and they knew also, that I had reason and Scripture on my side to back my opinions and practice; while, at the same time, they could not but see and allow, that I could and did discharge my professional duties as ably as themselves. But with officers in other ships, and further from the scene of action, things were different. These men often heard many a strange tale at my expense; so that it was very evident, when our ship was in port, that they were anxious to come on board, and see and hear something which, as they thought, would furnish matter for future jokes and merry tales.

Hence, when they had any acquaintance with my messmates, they would invite themselves on board to dine and pass an evening. I saw clearly through all this, and at times was not a little diverted at their ill-disguised disappointment, when having waited for an hour or two in expectation of something very ridiculous being said or done, they found me not very much unlike those around me. At length, perceiving that I was not likely to break in on the general conversation by beginning to preach, or exhibit any merry-andrew-like tricks, they themselves, though always ill prepared for such an undertaking, would introduce religion, and either attack, or pointedly refer all they advanced to me. On these occasions I ever felt that the discussion of such a topic was ill-timed, and often highly improper; but, as a gentleman at my own table, it behoved me to treat

these guests with every respect, to answer them with kindness, and, if necessary, to confute them as briefly and christian-like as possible. In this way I soon got clear of my assailants; and although I ever regretted having to take a part in these contests, I scarcely ever found them end otherwise than in my opponents confessing themselves on the wrong side, and expressing a wish that they were different men. Generally, as they found themselves driven from one position to another, they would take refuge in excuses for their acknowledged faults, and particularly would they endeavour to justify the practice of swearing, as an evil that could not be dispensed with in commanding the active duties of a ship of war. Of course, I denied all such necessity, and reprobated the practice as ungentlemanly and unofficer-like, as well as contrary to the Scriptures, and to our own Articles of War, or Naval Code. Still they would hold by the *necessity* of doing it, and stoutly protest, that no one could carry on the duty without it, however much he might wish to refrain. Having allowed them for some time to enjoy this one supposed victory in our debate, I produced my reserved confutation, by referring them to my messmates present, whether, during all the time we had sailed together, they had ever heard me swear at the men? and whether the duties of the ship were not carried on as promptly under my orders as under any other officer on board? This appeal, of course, was conclusive, and the subject was given up, generally by their expressing their astonishment, and wish that they could do the same.

Sometimes out of the ship, these things partook, in

no small degree, of the ludicrous; while they exhibited enough to prove how easily, and, often, how mischievously the *ignorance* and *prejudices* of men may work in defaming religion, and in misrepresenting its advocates. I remember, on an occasion of our ship being in harbour, that it was my turn to attend the dock-yard duty with a large party of the crew at the sail loft. At noon the party went off to dinner, from which they returned again at one o'clock to their work. During this interval I remained at my post: and as the officer of that part of the arsenal was a pious man, and had two very snug rooms, or cabins, on the premises, I availed myself of his offer, and took possession of one of them for half an hour. Having no book in my pocket, I was glad to find a Bible on the table. This I was quietly reading, when *Williams* the proprietor of the cabin, opened the door, and ushered in a lieutenant of the *Victory*, then lying at Spithead; and having merely introduced us to each by name, he withdrew. Finding myself thus closeted with an entire stranger, and having very little, just then, to say, I observed, that I had taken a quiet seat there until my men returned, and that I could not but admire the way in which *Williams's* Bible appeared to have been read, from the numerous marks down its margins. A little common-place chit-chat about our respective ships then followed, and in ten minutes' time my visitor left me again to myself. On my leaving the cabin, *Williams* enquired, "What I thought of Mr. N.?" to which I answered, "I did not think him either a serious or an interesting character." "Nor do I, Sir," replied he, "but I thought

you might do him some good; I, however, fear that is not likely to be the case; for, on leaving you, he came to me and said, 'Mr. Williams, you may be assured Mr. M—— has carried his religion too far,' and tapping his forehead with the ends of his fingers, he continued, 'depend upon it, Mr. Williams, he is a little cracked here.' I told him, Sir, I had no such thought; but he went away declaring it was so; and that such are the consequences of people carrying religion too far." "And such," I replied, not a little vexed, "are the consequences, Mr. Williams, of well meaning men, like yourself, acting so injudiciously as you have done. I cannot but feel astonished and displeased at your thus intruding such a person on me. He will now return to his ship and report, that he has seen and can bear witness to my madness—thus considerable prejudice will be raised, and the cause of religion will suffer through his ignorance and your indiscretion." Poor Williams had nothing to say in his own defence, but that he had done it with a good intention: of which I had no doubt, although that good intention would not ward off the ill consequences of a silly action.

In the course of the afternoon this same officer again made his appearance; and now was my time, if ever, to grapple with him in earnest, so as, if possible, to leave no doubt on his mind as to my sanity, and sobriety of judgment. But here I had some difficulty, for he evidently wished to shun my advances. At length, however, I fixed my man, and expended most of an hour in discussing professional and general topics, until I found I had dissipated all his fears of contagion, or

whatever else made him reluctant to enter into conversation, nay, I actually gained so far on his kindly feelings and favourable opinion, that it was with some difficulty I could excuse myself from going on board his ship to dine the next day. Having thus succeeded, I felt more than half inclined to forgive poor Williams; although it is certain, that had not this second interview taken place, his conduct would have produced consequences injurious to truth and religion. So necessary is it that discretion should ever go hand in hand with our zeal; and that men should pray for wisdom to know *when* and *how* to speak and act, as well as for courage and grace to be found doing the work of God in their various and respective stations.

As the foregoing little anecdote points out the effects of *prejudice*, so the one about to be related will exhibit those of *misrepresentation*. It was while we were lying in the Tagus, moored directly off the city of Lisbon, that I was appointed officer of the guard, and, of course, during one day and night, I had to board, examine, and report every ship and vessel that arrived or sailed. In the course of the day a British ship of war came in; and on going on board I found, in the person of one of her lieutenants, an old messmate, one with whom I had formerly served for three years as a brother midshipman. F——h received me very cordially; and as they were far down the river, and the ward-room dinner just going in, he pressed me to go below and take some refreshment, while the ship advanced higher up. Scarcely had I taken my seat, before my old messmate most furiously attacked me, with much noise and nonsense

about religion. For a while I parried off or replied to him as briefly as possible, until I considered it high time to apologize to the company in general for F——h and myself having engrossed so much of the conversation ; appealing to them that he had driven me to it. The company very politely and good humouredly acquitted me of all blame. Upon which F——h, giving me a clumsy, sea-faring slap on the shoulder, said, “ Well, M——s, never mind, I’ll tell you why I made the attack. Before we left Portsmouth I had heard such reports about you that I determined to see into the truth of the case, if ever I fell in with you again. Why, I was told, man, that you were become such a disagreeable, religious fellow, that there was no sitting in your company, for half an hour without being insulted ; and a good deal more of such stuff, which I now find to be all smoke in the wind. To be sure, I think you have got a little more religion about you than you had when we sailed together, but never mind, for I see you are much as you always were ; so here’s my hand, my boy, and good luck to you, all the world over.”

Of such sort were the little encounters that often fell in my way, at a time when every one thought it fair play to attack religion in a naval uniform. Yet these little contests, which, be it remembered, I never commenced myself, generally ended to my satisfaction ; and, on several occasions, not only removed long existing prejudices, but, to a certain degree, produced feelings of respect. Certainly, if by a continuance in well doing, we cannot put to silence the ignorance, the prejudice, and foolish misconceptions of worldly men, we shall

never do it by any other means. I am convinced, that consistency of character, and a moderate share of prudence, will, sooner or later, command respect from those with whom we associate; even when they may not feel disposed to follow in our track. Of this I had as many proofs among my shipmates in general as one could reasonably expect to find in the present state of things. All my messmates professed a friendship for me, and, with the exception of one, I believe they all felt so. This was a pleasant and merciful circumstance, as it smoothed down much of my rough path, and, on some occasions, enabled me to contribute to the general harmony of our ward-room circle, by showing the individuals where they had misunderstood each other. Nay, in one instance, it enabled me to bring about a reconciliation between two of them, the captain of marines, and the purser of the ship, who were only waiting an opportunity of getting on shore to fight a duel; which might have ended in the destruction of one or both of them. Their hostility had originated at the card table one evening while I was absent on duty; and the cool and deliberate challenge had been given and accepted a day or two before I learnt the fact. Had the parties' views of duelling been similar to my own, the business of mediating between them would have been an easy task, or rather there would have been no call for it. This, however, was not the case; and well did I know how much easier it would be to prove such a practice at utter variance with every dictate of reason, of justice, and equity, and with every command of God, than it would be to bring these gentlemen to submit to truths

they could not disprove. Yet I could not rest without making the attempt; and the more especially as no other person seemed disposed to do it. It was a delicate and difficult work, and I felt the need, as well as the encouragement of such an injunction and promise as are found in *James* i. 5. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." I will not disguise or deny, that as the difficulty of my task was great, and my anxiety to succeed in it was great also, I did entreat that wisdom so necessary, and so graciously promised, and I rejoice to say, that, through the blessing of God, I succeeded most completely, and had the happiness of leaving these gentlemen on terms of renewed friendship and mutual good will towards each other, when I quitted the ship to return to England; a circumstance which I, at this day, look back on with far more pleasure than I do on the part I took in that battle which procured me immediate and flattering promotion, because the one was the saving of life, while the other was the taking of life away.

CHAPTER XVII.

O blest seclusion from a jarring world!
..... Retreat
Cannot indeed to guilty man restore
Lost innocence, or cancel follies past;
But it has peace, and much secures the mind
From all assaults of evil."

COWPER.

HAPPINESS on this side the grave is at so low an ebb, at such a vast remove from that full fruition which the redeemed enjoy in their heavenly Father's kingdom, that when we speak of our attainments, of our present and past enjoyments of it, we only do so in a comparative sense, either with other inferior or similar beings, or with our own former state of mind. Different animals and different men are capable of a more or less exalted state of what is commonly termed happiness according to their perceptive capacities, the cultivation of their minds, and their facilities for gratifying their predominant and ruling desires. The beast, the barbarian, the sceptic, and the believer are thus happy; but it is only in a comparative sense. When therefore, as a Christian, I say the last eight days have produced no small portion of happiness, I mean they have afforded enjoyments more exalted than the brute creation has, or can be susceptible of—more refined and substantial

than many of my fellow-creatures have shared, and far, very far more so than what I myself formerly enjoyed. —These, however, have been infinitely small, in comparison of those I hope to partake of, when this frail and sinful body returns to its native dust, and the spirit, disencumbered of mortality, returns to God who gave it. Yet I bless the Lord for what I have enjoyed, and am not ashamed to draw the contrast between these and former days, and thus hold up to the vain and thoughtless reader another proof that his ways are not the ways of pleasantness, and his paths are not the paths of peace.

It is one gracious property in the divine government to produce good from evil, and on many occasions graciously to dispense this privilege to returning prodigals, who having left their kind parent's house, rejected his councils, spurned and cast away his bountiful provision, and scorned all his reproof, do at length, through grace, *come to themselves*, and arise and return with weeping and supplication to their much abused, but still compassionate, Father. Thus, in my own instance, foolish, perverse, and sinful as the greater number of my past days and actions have been, yet viewed in the retrospect, and compared with the present, they are not without their benefit. The more they are remembered and pondered over, the more they sink in my esteem and enhance the value of present privileges. For there is scarcely a wind can blow, or a storm arise—there is scarcely an accident can now befall the limbs or lives of my neighbours—there are few complaints can seize their bodies, or delusions of hell infatuate their minds, but in each circumstance the retrospect presents similar,

and oftentimes more distressing, events, as having been witnessed in others, or deeply shared in by myself. Nor is there a comfort I now enjoy, either political, domestic, or spiritual, but, when viewed in contrast with its opposite and past evil, has a tendency to increase the value of what I now possess.—Thus, through infinite mercy, I have been taught to esteem as blessings, many things which otherwise might have been overlooked or despised. Having been made to feel adversity myself, I have been taught to compassionate others. From seeing and suffering much, I have imperceptibly acquired a degree of medical knowledge, which now enables me to attend the couches of the sick poor, and often successfully to prescribe to those who in our poor and remote parish would otherwise be forlorn indeed. Having previous to my entering the ministry been exercised in the school of opposition, envy, hatred, and malice, and having read man not only in books, but in the army, the navy, and various societies in different parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia, I have come to my present and most important labours with some share of useful knowledge, which has at least helped me forward and taught me to overcome difficulties that otherwise would have been insurmountable. And thus a gracious God on many occasions leads me to extract present good from past evil. As the changes and seasons of the year arrive, and pass away, and are succeeded by others, each in its turn points backward to its corresponding portion, and although unable to “cancel past follies,” yet each speaks an audible and intelligible language, and says, *be humble for the past;*

be thankful for the present. This is certainly the case in the review of the last eight days,* and the recollection of similar past seasons. For when the retrospect glances at the Christmas seasons, at the old, and new year's days, which have marked a long succession of years, it can relate nothing of the greater part of them, but that they were spent in heathen indifference, and awful ignorance of the nature and attendant blessings connected with the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the duties and devotions in which, as men and professed Christians, we should employ our minds on the conclusion of one year and the commencement of another.—They are distinguished from other days only as they were more prolific of folly, revelling, inconsideration, and sin. But in the great number which thus passed away, my mind has been much struck, and I hope humbled by the recollection of one in particular, which occurred during my first visit to the Mediterranean.

After our return from the campaign and conquest of Egypt we remained some weeks at Malta. Independent of the casualties of active warfare, the climate of the former country had swept multitudes into eternity, and enfeebled many of the survivors; nor did the air of Malta relieve, but rather prolong and increase, the evil in my own and other cases in our ship. Several of the crew were landed, and only a part ever returned. As for myself, although I continued on board, I was too

* This paper was first drawn up on the 2d of January, 1816; of course the eight days alluded to included Christmas-day, as well as the succeeding old and new year's days, as they are commonly termed.

much reduced to be able to keep the deck or to do any duty; and at the time our ship was ordered to sea, I considered myself in a confirmed consumption.

On the last day of November, just after the commencement of the rainy tempestuous season, we sailed with a party of troops for the Isle of Elba, a voyage (had the wind and weather proved favourable) of not more than four days; but which employed us five and twenty to complete. During this time we had to contend with incessant gales of wind, and a miserably old and leaky vessel. Such a change from heat to cold, and from rest to labour, (for our ship made from two to three feet water every hour,) exhausted our diminished and debilitated crew, and soon laid up the captain, both lieutenants, and master, leaving only myself, the gunner, and one midshipman* to take command of the deck.— But this laborious and trying passage, which transferred almost every name from the watch-bill to the sick-list, was commissioned to produce an entirely different effect on myself. For in one week after quitting port, I was able to resume and continue my whole duty, by night and day, and from that period I enjoyed much better health than many of my comrades. At length, on the forenoon of Christmas-day, we reached our destination, and anchored in Porto Ferrajo. It was impossible, after such a voyage, not to enjoy the repose and comforts of a well sheltered harbour; nor would Christianity have refused that enjoyment, or forbidden us the comforts of a social dinner and a cheerful evening, so that we had

* The writer's rank at that time was master's mate.

still remembered and been thankful for the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, and for our deliverance from the toils and dangers of our uncomfortable voyage. But alas! not one of us had the least desire thus to commemorate the day. On the contrary, all the officers, whose health would admit, dined together, and passed the evening to a late hour, in loud and profane songs, hard drinking, and all that silly, loose, and unchristian conversation which never fails to accompany such parties. I certainly knew *why* this day had, from the early ages of the church, been set apart as a day of christian thankfulness; but I do not recollect that my heart *felt* the slightest degree of gratitude or love to God for the inestimable gift of his only begotten and dearly beloved Son. Nor did I once thank him for having "brought us to the haven where we would be." Such was my Christmas-day at Elba! It was what the world would call a jovial one, what some would even call a happy one.—It was what I then enjoyed; but my enjoyments were those of the sensualist and the brute, which left the body enfeebled by excess, and the mind dissatisfied with itself.

This day of unchristian hilarity was soon followed up by keeping the last day of the old year, and the first one of the new, in the usual manner—in revelling, banqueting, and excess; in stamping the broad seal of iniquity, rebellion, and spiritual madness on the conclusion of the one and on the commencement of the other; in filling up the measure of our own and each other's sins, and at the same time wishing each other a merry Christmas and a happy new year. What fools! what

folly! what perversion of words, and of times and seasons!——O man, man! whether thou wilt hear, or whether thou wilt forbear, I will again repeat “that madness is in thine heart while thou livest in thy natural and unrenewed state; for thou callest evil good and good evil; thou puttest bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter;” and the end of these things is declared to be *death*; not the

“*μάλα μακρὸν ἀτέρμονα, νήγρετον, ὕπνον,*”

“The long, the endless sleep,
From which no mortal wakes,”

of ancient or modern sceptics, but an eternal seclusion from that river of life, the streams whereof make glad the city of God—an eternal seclusion from the kingdom of that gracious Saviour, in whose presence there is a fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore. It is an eternal death to all the blessings of that rest which remains for the people of God; and it is an eternal life to endure the gnawings of that worm which never dies, and of that flame which shall not be quenched.—Reader! be not curious to know the exact nature of that worm and of that fire; but let me entreat thee to flee from their torment, by making God thy father, and Christ thy brother and thy friend, to succour thee in the day of adversity and revelation of the righteous judgments of God. Art thou one of those gay and thoughtless beings who are rushing forth through all the mazes and beguiling paths of a world that lies in wickedness?—Art thou flying from scene to scene, from one pursuit to another, still dissatisfied with

the past, and still deceiving thyself with hopes and expectations from the future? O let me entreat thee to pause one moment, and consider thy latter end—let me beseech thee to cease thy present fruitless race, nor once more enquire of the thoughtless sons of voluptuousness and dissipation, “Who will show me any good?” Be assured theirs is not the path which conducts to it, nor are they the people who can show thee the way—they live for time, and not for eternity; they are lovers of sinful pleasure more than lovers of God. Infidels in heart, and unholy in practice, their heathen precept is now, as in the days of St. Paul, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” They would stifle the remonstrances, and silence the voice of conscience as unwelcome intruders on their polluted hours. For them to reflect is to be miserable. From the days of classic yore to the present moment, the language of their heart has been the same—the same have been the desires of their mind;

“Vivamus, mea Lesbia atque amemus—
Soles occidere et redire possunt:
Nobis, cum semel occidit brevis lux,
Nox est perpetua una dormienda.”

“Come, my Lesbia, live and play,
Suns may set and suns may rise;
Soon as sets *our* passing day,
Endless night must close our eyes.”

But shall not God be avenged on such people as these? Yea, verily, “he that shall come will come, and will not tarry;” and when he does come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that

believe, he will execute judgment, and take awful vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel of his Son. As yet they harden themselves in transgression, and are willingly ignorant and studiously forgetful of death and judgment, of heaven and hell. Yet it is but a little while, and they shall know, to their eternal confusion, that man is born for eternity, and that "God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the secrets of all hearts by Jesus Christ." Be then entreated, my reader, and come out and separate thyself from these men, lest thou perish in their sins. Seek happiness in the smiles of thy Maker—lay up a treasure in heaven, and press forward to the enjoyment of an eternal inheritance among the saints in light—cultivate such sentiments, and seek such friends as will stand by thy couch, when the world and its advocates forsake thee; which will bear thee up and support thy soul, when trouble and sickness, when pain and death, shall shake and dissolve thine earthly frame. Surely were I to put the question, "Art thou happy?"—were I to enquire whether the evenings of thy past days saw thee from time to time lay down thy head well satisfied with the fruits and pleasures of the past hours?—whether thy mornings witnessed thy conscience approve each week and month, as it viewed them in the retrospect? thou wouldst reply, No.—Nor is it improbable but jaded, disappointed, and soured in all thy past pursuits, thou wouldst add, "So far from having enjoyed happiness in times past, or possessing it now, I begin to despair of ever being so; fate has ordained man to be wretched, has cast my lot as a son of disappointment,

and the child of sorrow." God, my reader, has ordained that wretchedness shall, even in this life, be the concomitant of sin, (at least where the conscience is not become wholly callous and reprobate,) and that the ungodly shall be like the troubled sea, whose restless waters cast up mire and dirt. This is all that has been ordained, unless it be that those who seek the Lord *shall* find him, and those who forsake him he *will* cast off for ever. O that these additional reasons may have their proper effect in stirring thee up to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, for then all other things will be added unto thee!

But I am to draw the contrast between the week spent at Elba, and the last one just passed in my parish. Let me then proceed to state, that although no diversified ranges of hill and valley beautified our fields—no mantling woods, no splendid palaces, no maritime views, added their charms to enliven the scenery around us, but on the contrary, that all was cheerless, cold, and unpicturesque to the traveller on the morning of Christmas-day, yet, under all these disadvantages, it was a season not without its comforts, its real enjoyments to myself and to many of my poor neighbours; although literally

The icicles hung from the eaves of each cot,
And the streams were hard bound by the frost."

On the morning of that day the first salute from our bleached and weather-beaten steeple, was not the peal of one set of drunken ringers, inviting others, first to the belfry, and thence to the ale-house, but it was the sober

and cheerful notice for divine worship, reminding us of our duty and privilege to say to each other, "Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord, he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his statutes."—It was between the hours of ten and eleven that I formerly entered the harbour of Porto Ferrajo, and lost sight of a confused and turbulent world of waters; and between the same hours I entered this venerable house of prayer, and for a season lost sight of the more confused and restless world of men who know not God. Unlike the splendid and semi-pagan churches of Italy and its adjacent islands and countries, our humble and ancient building had nothing in its decorations or in its accommodations to invite the loungeur or the artist to enter its walls; nor were our congregation of that sort as to draw those among us whose desire was to see and be seen; in short, it might reasonably be considered as formed of those who really came to worship God.

It was my solemn and distinguished lot to stand up as an ambassador of Christ, and to declare to these people the blessings which, as on that day, were communicated to the world when the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men"—to declare the offices and work of the Saviour, as predicted in the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah, and three first verses—to show, that "the Spirit of the Lord God was upon Christ Jesus," because the Lord Jehovah had anointed him to preach good tidings to the meek, that he had sent him to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound—to proclaim the acceptable year

of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint and to give unto them that mourn in Zion beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. From the brief consideration of these soul-refreshing doctrines, a part of the congregation followed me to the Lord's table, to eat of that bread and drink of that cup, which were to show forth the dying love of the Saviour, until he come to judge the world: nor have I the smallest doubt but that several did then and there feed on him in their hearts by faith with thanksgiving. It was a season much to be remembered. While standing before the altar, and ministering to these people, I recollected Elba, and all my aggravated sins at that island. I well remembered also that it was on that very day three years, in which I first stood up to officiate in my solemn character—I remembered the dreary aspect of this then almost forsaken house of God, and the few who approached the blessed Sacrament, and I could not but adore the goodness of the Lord, who since that time had much changed the face of things, and increased our numbers more than four-fold; and all this through the instrumentality of one, who, had he received but one thousandth part of his merited punishment, would then have been where hope, and peace, and mercy never come.

Nor was the evening of the same day a solitary one. If the world had its parties, so had I mine—no sparkling wines or costly viands graced our board, but we

were not without our feast. No loud intemperate mirth did violence to the tender conscience; yet we were cheerful; and although no idle, frivolous, or unchaste theme occupied our tongues, yet we did not want for subjects of conversation. Reader, is thy curiosity excited to know of what description of persons my party was composed? I will inform thee, although in so doing I may incur the contemptuous smile of some, and the loud and illiberally expressed derision of others. It consisted of young people and children, all poor in this world's goods, but not a few of them rich in grace—untutored in the refined duplicity of polite life, and the finesse of higher ranks, but intelligent and sincere in the things of God—children over whom I had watched almost daily for three years past, and who numbered among them not a few who had grown in grace as they had grown in stature—children whose confidence and affection I knew I possessed, and whose troubles and spiritual conflicts had often been made known to me as to one whom they had tried and found their sincere and affectionate friend, as well as minister in Christ Jesus. Of such was my Christmas evening party mainly composed. With this beloved and affectionate group I conversed on my own, and on the generality of men's perverse abuse of the present and other seasons. We then sang some scriptural poetry, expressive of the nature and blessings connected with the day; and afterwards I endeavoured to set before them the exceeding mercy of having an Emmanuel to guide us through all the dangers and difficulties of life by his unerring counsel, and finally to receive us to his glory. Tears of gratitude

and christian joy filled many eyes, and I trust that the Lord approved the desires of many hearts. This done, we knelt down and thanked the author of all our mercies for the means of grace and the hope of glory which he had afforded us, and then we separated in unity and peace.

The following Sabbath concluded the year, the evening of which was spent with the same party. On that night it was my endeavour to lead their minds back through all the parts of the year then expiring : to remind them of the changes, the judgments, and mercies which our parish had witnessed since its commencement—to hold up the flight, the rapidity, and value of time, and the sure and speedy approach of eternity—to display the emptiness and vanity of all earthly good, and the importance and value of heavenly riches—to warn them how reasonable it was to expect death would break in on some one or more then present, ere another such season arrived ; and hence to enforce the necessity of standing with our lamps trimmed and our lights burning, and ourselves as those who wait the coming of their Lord. Never in the whole course of my life had I experienced a more full and realizing sense of the truth and importance of these subjects than on that evening. An unusual degree of solemnity pervaded our party, and the greater number seemed deeply impressed with what they heard. Great, very great, had been the mercies of God to many of us, and to myself in particular. He had strengthened my hands in many arduous ministerial undertakings, and carried me for three years through difficulties of no ordinary magnitude.

At the conclusion of this year, many circumstances seemed to indicate to those about me, that my strength was then failing, and that henceforth I should probably do but little in comparison of the past. This impression caused a mutual sympathy and feeling for each other, and drew our hearts closer in the ties of christian affection, and made us more earnest in seeking pardon for the past, and grace to improve all the future. Reader, I feel a conviction, beyond the power of language to express, that in all our services, thoughts, words, and works, we fall infinitely short of perfection. Yet, when I reflect on this day, and compare it with the termination of past years, I can and ought to bless God, and to adore the riches of that grace which has made me to differ from what I once was, and from what many now are. Whether I were ever to meet the same party again on a similar occasion, was known only to the Lord; but I can say with truth, that no place, no season, no society, ever interested my soul more than this did; and especially while the following hymn was singing by so unusual a number of serious young people and intelligent children, whose understandings and hearts, I had every reason to believe, went with the words of their lips.

“ Let hearts and tongues unite,
And loud thanksgivings raise!
'Tis duty, mingled with delight,
To sing the Saviour's praise.

When on the breast we hung
Our help was in the Lord;
'Twas he first taught our infant tongue
To form the lisping word.

In childhood and in youth,
 His eye was on us still,
 Though strangers to his love and truth,
 And prone to thwart his will.

Now, through another year,
 Supported by his care,
 We raise our Ebenezer here ;
 'The Lord hath help'd thus far.'

Our state in future years
 Since we cannot foresee,
 He kindly, to prevent our fears,
 Says, 'Leave it all to me.'

O may we then all cast
 Our care upon the Lord !
 And praise him for his mercies past,
 And trust his promis'd word."

Most confident am I, that man is justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; even by faith without the deeds of the law, but still I cannot help saying, "O that I had ended all my past days as I ended this."

The morrow, or Monday, was of course new year's day; a day, whereon thousands of mankind in this land pull down a more than ordinary portion of wrath on themselves by idleness and excess, by oaths and profaneness. On this day, in our villages, as well as in our large towns, the labourer either refrains from his task altogether, or quits it at an earlier hour than usual, to repair to the ale-house, and there he holds a great feast unto Baal; while his impoverished wife and children are pining in wretchedness at home. Knowing that several of my young friends would be at leisure in the

evening, I gave a general invitation to all who chose to meet and pass a couple of hours in seeking the divine blessing on the succeeding weeks and months, and my room was again nearly filled. I shall not, however, enter into particulars on this occasion: the christian reader will not doubt my words. when I say we found it good thus to wait upon God—to begin the new year with prayer, as we had ended the old one in praise. On the morrow I felt thankful to the Lord, on the review of what had happened. and blessed his holy name for the mercies of such a Christmas, for such a conclusion of the old year, and such a commencement of the new, which, when compared to the corresponding seasons passed at Elba and many other places, left no doubt on my mind, whether the path of christian duty be the path of peace. But here methinks I hear the reader exclaim, “All this is very well for a minister who has nothing else to do, and whose business it is to be thus employed: but such things cannot be expected from others!” To this I answer, that so far as public ministerial duties were concerned in the house of God, the reply is just: but all I have related as done in my own private parlour, might be done by many a master or mistress, by many a naval and military officer, with an equal prospect of good arising from such christian labours. Nor would this occasional condescension to instruct a few domestics and poor children in the least sink their real dignity. or be acting out of character, in those who profess to believe in Him who preached to all men, as well as to ministers, the whole of what is recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew’s gospel.

David was a warrior, and a king of Israel, and not a priest. Yet he was the condescending and instructive companion of all them that feared God, and to such he often said, "Come hither, and I will tell you what the Lord hath done for my soul."

To quit the drawing-room and all its splendour, to leave fashion, elegance, mirth, and beauty behind, and to assemble a little group of dependents and poor children, and converse with them concerning "another and a better world," and the way to obtain it, would indeed expose both master and mistress to the trial of cruel mockings, to no little share of derision and contempt from the sons and daughters of folly and dissipation. But if this be done and continued in a truly christian spirit, and from christian motives, it would insure that sentence, "Come, ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for inasmuch as ye have done this thing unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Reader! since the foregoing part of this chapter was written, seventeen years have passed over my head. And this very Christmas-day (1832) makes it exactly twenty years since I commenced my ministerial labours, by officiating as curate of the humble village of W——ch.

Twenty years, reader! This is a long period to calculate on; and yet it actually seems but as yesterday in the retrospect. Short, however, as it may thus appear, it is a portion of time which greatly shortens the span of human life; and crowds within its limits, many events of the utmost importance, as connected with aa

eternal destiny, at least I feel it to be so in my own case; and, had I the power to do it, I would carry home to thy bosom, my reader, all the deepening, and all the solemnizing feelings which I myself at this moment experience in the retrospect of these gone-by years. This, however, I cannot do; but I will tell thee how, at this moment, I feel, if possible, a hundred-fold more than I did twenty years ago, the wisdom of seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness;—of counting all things as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. Nor are these feelings the effect of increasing years on the mind and body; or of a soured temper, or of disappointed hopes and expectations; for at this hour I possess better health and spirits, and enjoy more of the comforts of life than I did at the former period; and as to the intervening years, I have to look back on them as bringing one after another a succession of mercies and blessings to me far greater than they bestowed on millions of my compeers.

Oh! what changes and unlooked-for events have occurred since I wrote the former part of this chapter! Where are the individuals who composed my then little parties? Many of them are in eternity! Some of them, I feel certain, are rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory in the kingdom and presence of Christ; and some of them—oh! distressing thought!—I have but too much cause to fear, are lost and that for ever! As to the survivors, their various and humble histories, if truly told, would exhibit many illustrations of that wisdom I have alluded to, and of the folly and madness of pursuing an opposite course. Many cares, anxieties,

and sorrows, have fallen to the lot of almost every one of them, and change after change has altered all their earthly circumstances, and scattered many of them far and wide from the spot where we then assembled together. The very aspect of the village is changed, and several of the places where we once collected together are no longer to be found. Yet amidst all the changes which time and death, and prosperity and adversity, and arrivals and removals, have occasioned, I have to bless God that some substantial evidences remain that the Gospel then preached among them was not in vain in the Lord. Though absent in body, I am still present with many of them in spirit; and we are waiting in humble hope of by and by hailing each other in that kingdom where the inhabitants never go out. May the Divine presence shine brighter and brighter on their path until they finish their course and receive their crown. And may the tender mercies of our heavenly Father pardon and reclaim every backslider, and heal all the broken-hearted penitents; and stay all those who, as yet, are travelling down that broad road which leadeth to destruction. Oh, may His boundless grace spare and snatch them as brands from the fire for Jesus Christ our redeemer's sake. Amen *

* Such readers as are inclined to follow the writer through a variety of scenes and events connected with his pastoral labours, and with the history and circumstances of many of his poor people during the first fifteen years of his ministry, will find them detailed in his three little publications called, "*The Village Observer*," "*The Village Church Yard*," and "*The Village Pastor*," &c.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“THOU SHALT REMEMBER ALL THE WAY WHICH THE LORD THY GOD LED THEE.”—DEUT. viii. 2.

HITHERTO the *Retrospect* has in general gone back to days spent on the bosom of the deep, and to events which transpired among naval men. Indeed, when this humble volume first went into public, there had elapsed but a short time, comparatively speaking, from my quitting those scenes of war and tumult. But now the case is otherwise. My days have measured out more than twenty years since that period; a portion of my life far greater than that which was passed at sea. And am I not bound by every call of duty and gratitude to “remember all the way which the Lord my God hath led me these twenty years?” It is true, that neither battles or shipwrecks, storms or tempests, have diversified this part of the journey; neither have I to tell of distant lands or hair-breadth escapes from death. Yet have these years been laden with mercies, and rendered memorable to me by events more unlooked for, and vastly more important than any which transpired at sea. It is probable, however, that some of these may not produce the same effect on all my readers as on myself. Yet I believe there are not a few, who having taken an interest in the tales of more distant times, will feel disposed

to follow me through a few circumstances connected with my latter years.

Among the greatest of all my mercies, and the most exalted privileges with which my lot has been signalized, I must ever esteem this as the first, namely, that I should have been permitted and enabled, though in ever so humble and obscure a way, to go forth, and "preach among my fellow-men the unsearchable riches of Christ" For, while I would not deduct aught from those claims to honour and usefulness which many other professions can advance, I must still consider the office of the ministry of God's word as the most solemn and honourable which man can fill beneath the sun. All others having reference, either principally or entirely, to the things of time, while this applies to those of eternity—the former having for their object the life that now is, while the ministry of reconciliation is continually bearing on those which are to come. Hence every event which, in the chain of divine providence, connected itself with this subject, and which, directly or indirectly, led on to this end, is now viewed by me with peculiar interest, and will be so through all eternity; and, oh! how many and distinct do they now appear in the retrospect of the Lord's dealings. Yet, no event could, at one period of my life, have been more improbable; and, certainly, none was less thought of by myself. Many a time, during the last two years of my naval career, have I beguiled a portion of the midnight watch by allowing my thoughts and fancy to range on ideal objects; while among these none were more pleasing as a kind of waking day-dream than that of

the ministerial office. Often have I allowed the mind to put this question, "Were it possible for you to recast, and re-choose your lot, what of all stations and pursuits would you prefer, and be occupied in?" And as often did I reply, "I would be in the ministry of the Gospel, as the pastor of a village flock, and possess a sufficiency of means and knowledge of medicine to enable me, in the absence of regular help, to administer to the bodily sufferings of my sick poor, while I were pointing their souls to the heavenly Physician." These waking dreams were often indulged in *as mere reveries*, at a time when I no more expected them to be realized than I expected to ascend to heaven in Elijah's chariot of fire. And yet, in as short a time as was possible, all this was literally accomplished. It was so great, as well as so unexpected a change, that many times, in my little jounies to and from my cottagers, during the first year of my ministerial labours, I have stopt short by the way, and asked myself, "Is this a reality, or is it a delusion?" Indeed, it seemed at these times more like my former waking mid-watch reveries. Let not the reader, however, suppose that I ran uncalled or unsent; let him not do me the injustice to imagine, that I thrust myself hastily, or self-willed into this sacred office. That it was not so, many now living can testify—nay more, they can bear witness, that every step was suggested, urged upon me, and marked out from the time I landed at Portsmouth, in 1810, until I was actually in holy orders, and settled as the licensed curate of a village parish of seven hundred and fifty souls. Having, on many former occasions, seen the goodness of my heavenly

Father in defeating my plans, and frustrating my fondest and most anxious wishes, I determined, as the close of my preparatory studies drew near, not to choose a post of labour for myself. Well I knew, that however humble these labours might be in themselves, He who blessed my poor endeavours in the *wing* of His Majesty's ship C——r could own and bless them on the land, if he were graciously pleased to do so. And I knew also, that unless this blessing went continually with all I said and did, no good could be effected. Hence, it was to me, of the utmost importance that I should be where my God would have me, and not where I might fix myself. With this object in view, I left all the choice and arrangements of place and people to the judgment and exertions of some of those pious and kind friends who had hitherto most interested themselves in my projected new sphere of life. I only insisted on one condition, namely, that my post should be among a mass of poor and plain people; and then, as to distance, they might mark out ten miles or ten thousand for me to journey to them as a matter of indifference to me. I thought by thus leaving myself out, and placing others in the arrangements of a station, I should be more entirely under the guidance of God. And most clearly did his providence direct all my ways, until the cloud and the pillar led me on and marked out a spot where I was to fix my tent—a spot concerning which I heard so ill a report as I drew near it, that my heart rebelled, and I said, "Here I cannot stay." It was indeed then one of the most dreary scenes of country, and peopled by a set of the rudest inhabitants I had ever seen in

England. Here, however, I took up my station, not, as I at first thought, for a few weeks or months, but for seven years; and all these years, like those which Jacob served for his Rachel, seemed only as so many days, for the interest I felt in my little labours, and in the encouragement which the Lord gave me, that they were not in vain in him. At the end of these seven years, a new train of equally clear and combined providences bid me prepare to march on one stage further in the wilderness, and tarry there until the next movement should direct me to cross the Jordan which separates this wilderness from the promised land. In other words, He who walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and carries the stars in his right hand, again directed my movements, and led me to my present station, where I have ever since remained.

“Nor e'er have chang'd, or wish'd to change my place.

Here, placed beyond those anxieties which must ever attend the uncertain tenure of a curate's engagements, and still farther removed from all the vexations of haughty and capricious naval men, and from all the strife and contentions of warlike pursuits, I am blessed with all the necessaries, and some of the indulgences of life, without being exposed to the dangers of affluence. Meanwhile, on every side, I behold a wide and interesting field of ministerial labour ready for every exertion I can put forth, while I myself am surrounded by a numerous and affectionate people, among whom I hope to labour, and to die; and with many of whom I hope to unite my praises in those higher and better

strains which are only sung in heaven. Nor have I forgotten those dear departed souls who, in my former parish, died in the Lord, nor those now living there, who were my hope and joy while I dwelt among them. The day will come, when, through the merits and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, we shall, I trust, again meet, and form a part of the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; and who there ever behold and praise Him who was dead, and is alive again, and hath redeemed them to God through his most precious blood.

CHAPTER XIX.

“THOU SHALT REMEMBER ALL THE WAY WHICH THE LORD THY GOD LED THEE.”—DEUT. viii. 2.

“BY HONOUR AND DISHONOUR, BY EVIL REPORT AND GOOD REPORT.”—2 COR. vi. 8.

THE reader, who has perused the foregoing chapter to its close may well say, “that it behoves me to be thankful.” He must not, however, suppose from what is there stated, that I have dwelt beneath an unclouded sun, and travelled none but smooth and flowery paths, ever since I quitted the sea. No, this has not been the case. Man is born to a greater or less portion of trouble, as certainly as that the sparks fly upwards.

“’Tis the associate of all human kind,
In calms we meet it, meet it in the wind—
From sorrow’s shafts no garrison can shield,
To her assaults must ev’ry mortal yield.”

Many a cheering proof of ministerial success has the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls given to strengthen my hands, when they have been ready to hang down in sorrow and despair; so that, at times, while more holy and able men have been mourning over what they, perhaps erroneously, considered an unfruitful field of labour, I have been permitted to see, that God gave me some

increase. These merciful cordials were not sent unnecessarily or in vain; they have arrived at the best of seasons, and have afforded relief when trials were at hand. For often have I had to mourn over the backslidings of the young and the old; to see all my fond hopes and fair expectations blasted, in many instances, when and where I least expected, and most keenly felt, the disappointment. Nor have I been altogether exempt from trials on the part of my brethren and superiors in the ministry. At the time I am writing, and for some years past, I have enjoyed the happiness of serving under a diocesan whose anxious desire it is, that all his clergy may "be instant in season and out of season, to save souls alive." Hence, for a long time, I have had neither to encounter rebuke, nor to apprehend opposition from any quarter, for endeavouring to do what my duty, my time, and strength demand and enable me to perform, for the instruction and salvation of my people: and so far as a minister who *rebukes*, as well as exhorts his flock, can reasonably expect to find it, I certainly do enjoy the respect and affection of the people among whom I dwell and minister the word. But things were not always so, either in my former or my present parish.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is a *regenerating*, experimental principle; and his Gospel being his ordained power unto salvation, it separates its partakers from a world that lieth in wickedness, and makes them a new and a peculiar people. Hence this blessed Gospel is as much resisted and condemned by many a chief priest, and scribe, and pharisee of the Church of Eng-

land in the nineteenth century, as it was by those of Jerusalem in the time of our blessed Lord's sojourn upon earth—as much disapproved of, and vilified by many of our worldly minded clergy and laity on shore, as it is by many of the captains and other officers of our ships of war at sea. All this our Lord assured his disciples would be the case, so long as men are strangers to the saving and converting grace of God. This I knew before I entered into the ministry; and, knowing this, and being determined, by the help of God, to preach the good old doctrines of this glorious but abused Gospel, as they are made known in the Scriptures, and laid down in the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy of our national church, I could not expect that clergymen of the above description would give me the right hand of fellowship, or speak well of my intentions or proceedings. Nor was I mistaken in my calculations, for very soon after I commenced my labours, those who were nearest at hand shunned me, and spake ill of my ways; nor did they stop here, for some of them, and particularly an old naval chaplain, of whose fame I had heard before I quitted the service, wrote to the bishop, entreating him to rebuke me, and tie up my hands. Indeed, so many were their threats of getting me further from them, that for a long time both myself and my venerated friend, the encumbent, expected the order for my removal to arrive every week. This kept us both, as well as my affectionate poor flock, in a state of unsettledness and continual anxiety. Yet, notwithstanding all which my adversaries said and did, I continued, amidst evil report and good report, for seven years; even until

I saw it was my duty, and felt it was my choice voluntarily to leave this post for another and far more important sphere of action. Yet this act of leaving the people was truly a painful one, when the moment arrived that it must be put into execution. So long as I could, I had kept the matter from their knowledge; and when I quitted the village, I stole, as it were, away, for I could not encounter the task of going and saying in person, "farewell." Thus I left my first flock in presence, but not in spirit, for many a spot in their quiet church-yard is in my estimation, hallowed ground; because there sleep the remains or mortal part of several who were exceedingly dear to me, as being among the first fruits of my public ministry; and whose parting blessings were given to me as the most precious of legacies, just as they stood on the confines of time, and were about to wing their flight into the presence and glory of their Redeemer.

But now a fresh train of opposition arose when I least expected any such encounter. The kind and generous friend who, unsolicited, had made me an offer of my present living, brought me hither on the Saturday, and showed me whatever he thought would induce me to accept it, and fix my wanderings for the residue of my days. We staid over the approaching Sabbath, and I preached in the church twice on that day; not to bare walls, but to a deplorably thin and heartless congregation. Among these were a few of the leading inhabitants; two or three of whom choose to be highly offended with the matter and manner of my services. The subjects of my discourses were

Romans i. 16. "*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,*" and Revelation xiv. 13, "*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*" From the first of these texts I endeavoured to show the nature and tendency of the Gospel. How, that while it exhibits to fallen man his lost estate by nature, and by practice; it brings life and immortality to light, and is, in the Hands of the Holy Spirit, the instrument of enlightening his understanding, sanctifying his heart, and saving his soul; "by grace through faith; and that not of himself, for it is the gift of God; not of works, least any man should boast." From the second, I aimed to describe, what the blessedness of those who die in the Lord consists of; namely, a perfection of holiness, happiness, and wisdom in the society of angels, and spirits, and just men made perfect, and in the presence and glory of God the Saviour—That, "dying in the Lord" is dying in the faith of Christ; being justified by faith in his obedience and sacrifice, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost. And that the works of such characters, that is, the works of faith, and labours of love, do follow them *as evidences*, that they were those who "worshipped God in the Spirit; rejoiced in Christ Jesus: and placed no confidence in the flesh." In short, that the works of the believer do follow him *as evidences* of his having possessed that saving faith in Christ, "which purifies the heart. works by love, and overcomes the world," In which point of view, as our Church Art-

icles declare, "*They are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ; although they cannot put away our sins, or endure the severity of God's judgment.*" For they have no merit in them, whereon man can advance any claim upon God; seeing that "*we are accounted righteous before Him, only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and that not of our works or deservings.*"*

Had I preached from the Alcoran of Mahomet, or the Shaster of Buddhu, my doctrine could not have appeared more strange, or proved more offensive to some of my hearers; who, on leaving the church, declared with vehemence, that if they could prevent it, I should never come as the resident incumbent of their church. The next day I left the place for my old parish; having been previously informed that immediate steps would be taken to prevent my settling here. My poor dear flock, to whom I had now returned for a short season, knew not where I had been, nor what was likely to take place. And little did they know or conceive how those doctrines, which they delighted to have preached to them, had met so unwelcome a reception elsewhere. Meanwhile, having again consulted those friends to whom, under God, I had hitherto committed my movements, and finding them unanimously of opinion that I ought to go, and the more so as there appeared every probability of their obtaining a good and suitable man to step into my place, I determined to face the opposition about to be made, and abide by the result. Praying to

* See Articles of Faith XII. and XI. Book of Common Prayer.

the Lord, that he would direct my path, and make it plain, either by frustrating my adversaries, or by permitting their efforts to succeed, just as his good pleasure might be in favour of my going or not going to this projected new station.

About three weeks after preaching the offensive sermons, I waited on the Bishop for institution; when the legal or official parts of the business were gone through without cavil or delay. I was then given to understand, that his Lordship had been written to by some of the inhabitants of the parish, complaining, as he thought, very justly of my proceedings during the short time I had been among them. His Lordship, indeed, appeared to sympathize very much with my accusers. In the course of a long, and, to give it the mildest term, a very unpleasant conversation, it appeared that the "head and front of my offending" lay in the following particulars; First, in that I had accompanied my kind friend and patron to the house of one of his farmer-tenants, to take tea in the afternoon of the Sabbath, instead of going to our quarters at the inn; such tenant, moreover, being a Dissenter. Secondly, in that I took a large Bible into the pulpit. Thirdly, in that I gave utterance to many more words in my discourses than were actually written down in the notes before me. And, lastly, in that I absolutely denied the merit of good works to purchase or to procure heaven. It also appeared in this unpleasant conversation, that my opponents had learnt, and communicated the fact of my having been once in the service of my country as an officer in the navy, and that as such, I had formerly been employed in defending

them, with the other peaceful inhabitants of the land, from the swords and bayonets of combined Europe. This circumstance, which I had never before imagined would lower me in the scale of British society, now appeared as a blot on my escutcheon. Happily poor old England was then at peace with all nations, and needed no longer to be defended from invasion; and now, those with whom I had to do, made it painfully manifest that they looked on me with a degree of contempt for the hard services I had once cheerfully rendered them. Frivolous and illiberal as the above charges and insinuations against me may appear to my readers, they actually were considered as matters of grave import by my accusers and diocesan; and produced, on the part of the latter, what I must ever consider as unkind behaviour towards me. Feeling, as I did, that unkindness, and at the same time supported by a spirit of independence, arising from the conviction, that I had neither lowered myself in society, by my former public station and services, nor at M——n had committed any offence whatever against the rules of propriety, good morals, or church discipline, I refused to plead guilty to any thing criminal; while I freely acknowledged I was guilty of all the four charges laid in my indictment. But as I did not either then or now feel myself bound to comply with the whims and fancies of two or three pharisaic, capricious individuals, I could not promise, never in future to give utterance, in my sermons and addresses, to one word beyond what I had actually lying before me in writing. This had so unhappy an effect on my superior, as to induce him to go

to the extremity of his power in prohibiting me, at my peril, from preaching in any part of his diocese, except within the limits of my own parish. To me, however, this was no punishment at all; for, as I stated to his Lordship, from what I had seen of the extent of my field of labours, there would be far more preaching and teaching required than I should ever be able to perform; and consequently that I should have neither time nor inclination to go further off for work. Such were the consequences of a few officious, conceited, self-righteous individuals interfering with what they had no concern, and setting themselves up for judges of what they understood little or nothing, and all this too in direct opposition to the views, opinions, and wishes of nineteen out of every twenty of their neighbours. My prohibition, however, lasted but about nine months; for, at the end of that time, it pleased God suddenly to remove my prohibitor into another world, where I most sincerely hope he found rest unto his soul, and where, if I am permitted to meet him, we shall perfectly understand each other's acts and motives, and be of one heart and of one mind for ever. This unpleasant affair was, on my coming to reside at the living, followed up by another of a more petty character.

One of the busy individuals, a *Diotrephes* in his way, who loved to have the pre-eminence, and had taken a part on the former occasion, vexed that they had not more effectually succeeded with the Bishop, now determined, himself, to act a leading part in annoying me, even to the extent of what, on ship-board, would have been termed "open mutiny." This man, under the influ-

ence of a shallow head, and a peevish, angry, self-righteous temper, actually employed several days in misleading and ill-advising some of our choir of church singers; encouraging them to set me at defiance, and, during divine service, to resist my regulation, and proceed totally independent of me. Learning, on the Saturday, what part the mutineers would in all probability act on the morrow, I wrote to Mr. *Diotrephes*, without informing him how much I knew of the part he had taken, directing him to act up to the laws of the land, and his own official engagements, and be present on the morrow at church, and there do his duty, in protecting me from all interruptions, and also in taking into custody, without exception, all who should attempt to interrupt the service. This, as I expected brought him to his recollection, and so alarmed both him and his party, that the latter absented themselves from the parish altogether on the day of their intended exploits, and in a few weeks, having obtained the good services of one of the most respectable of the inhabitants as my churchwarden, we disbanded the whole choir; pulled down their privileged partitions; and threw the whole gallery into open seats for less conceited and more christian-like individuals to occupy. From that time, every thing worthy the name of opposition has gradually died away: some of my opponents having departed this life, and others having left the parish; so that I am enabled to say, "through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report, I have lived to see the day wherein I experience at the hands of my people in general, more kindness and respect than falls to the common lot of parochial ministers."

This is a great mercy and comfort, for which I desire to be thankful both to God and man: and I pray that the Lord's choicest blessings may rest abundantly on the head of every individual who has shown, or does now show favour unto his servant.

CHAPTER XX.

“THOU SHALT REMEMBER ALL THE WAY WHICH THE LORD THY GOD LED THEE.”—DEUT. viii. 2.

“MY GOD SHALL SUPPLY ALL YOUR NEED ACCORDING TO HIS RICHES IN GLORY BY CHRIST JESUS.”

PHIL. iv. 19.

CONNECTED with my many and great mercies, first as the curate of one parish and afterwards as the incumbent of another, I ought ever to remember how the Lord hath led me, and supplied not merely my own various wants, but the wants of my poor people with the means of instruction and various moral benefits, without which supplies my schools and various other little institutions, so necessary for their spiritual good, could not have been set on foot or carried on. These supplies have frequently arrived in such a way as would hardly gain credit—the tale concerning many of them, if told, would appear too much like romance. I will tell but one, and that of the less extraordinary cast; for this will, in some measure, prove how the Lord has supplied, all my needs, for others as well as for myself. During the early part of my curacy I had been assisted by various friends in building a school-room, large enough to house all the young people and children of the village.

This was used for a Sunday school throughout the year, and for an evening school for adults and children during the winter. The building had been paid for, and fully occupied for one year: but now, the second autumn was at hand, while a few pounds of debt had been incurred in some necessary alterations, and an entire stock of books, stationery, fuel, candles, and all the appendages necessary to school-keeping for the winter were required; while I, as a sailor would term it, had not a shot in the locker wherewith to procure them. Day after day the people enquired, "When the evening school was to commence?" and with a heavy heart I could only reply, "I hoped soon." But it was a forlorn hope, for I had already drawn so deeply on the bounty of all my friends to rear the building, that I could not call on them again: and as the parish had gone to a heavy expense in rendering the old church decent and commodious, I could not apply for aid at home; so I knew not what to do. It seemed as though this part of our proceedings must be suspended altogether. Such was the state of our little affairs, when a gentleman, an entire stranger, called for half an hour, with an old naval acquaintance of mine, and then left the village. Nothing during their stay, had passed in our conversation relative to these difficulties; and when we parted I had not the most distant expectation of hearing from, or ever seeing this person again. But no sooner had he reached London than he remitted me a bank post bill of sufficient amount to pay off our debt, furnish a stock of all necessaries, and carry on the whole schooling for the winter: while the people were alike

ignorant of my difficulties and apprehensions, and of the way in which the good providence of God relieved me from them both.

It may here be a proper place to state, that soon after I had entered into orders, I considered it right to withdraw my name from the Navy List, and consequently to relinquish my half-pay, a step to which several of my friends objected; arguing, that this income was a remuneration for past services; and that many gentlemen who had entered the church from the army and navy continued to draw theirs. In addition to these arguments they declared, with great truth, that in giving up the naval profession I had turned my back on all my fair prospects in the world; that I was never likely to obtain ecclesiastical riches; nay, that I had nothing before me but poverty in this world for my services in the church, and that I should need every shilling of my half-pay to procure me the necessaries of life; and the more especially so, as they were pleased to think I did not know how to economize, or take care of a few shillings when I happened to have them. To all this I replied, "that I felt I had, indeed, earned this half-pay by honest, hard service, and that I might *legally* continue to receive it; but that, under all circumstances, I considered it *inexpedient* to do so. I could trust in the promises and providence of a gracious God to supply all my needs; and would not leave it in the power of worldly men to say, I had embarked in the service of the church for the sake of ease or emolument. Moreover, by thus casting myself on God for food and raiment, I was taking one direct step to satisfy my own

mind as to the honesty of my motives in entering into my new calling." I accordingly directed my agent to make out my account, and prepare for a final settlement. This done, I sent to Sir George Hope, my kind and best naval friend, then one of the most influential Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, sincerely acknowledging my deep sense of all his past favours, and informing him that as I was then a member of the University, and in holy orders, and did not intend to embark again on shipboard, I requested my name might be removed from the Navy List; to make room for, at least, one of those many and meritorious young men who had long been waiting and hoping for promotion.

I fear, that Sir George united with some of my acquaintance in condemning my conduct as inconsiderate and rash: but I have ever felt thankful to God that I had it in my heart, and in my power, to take this step. I believe it was the most consistent one I could take, and I am sure, that He, into whose more immediate service I had entered, and on whose more direct providential care I thus cast myself, has never, since that day, ceased to care for me! Truly, "my God hath supplied all my needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus!" Yet my faith was sometimes put to the test, and, no doubt, would have quite failed, had not He who prayed for Peter interceded for me also. When I wrote to my agent for a final settlement I knew that I was on the best side of his books; for, low as was the opinion of my friends as to my prudence in worldly affairs, I always aimed to keep out of debt; but the result of the balance-sheet soon convinced me, that my

credit amount was less than I had supposed it to be. Just about that time I had fitted up and replenished a good village medical dispensatory; and having calculated its annual cost, and the expenses of our schools, and other little religious and moral establishments, I looked, first at my balance-sheet, then at my dispensatory schools, and lastly at my salary as curate; and saw at once, that I could not long keep these things going myself, and I really knew not where to calculate on supplies from others. Here the demon of unbelief suggested, "Would it not have been wiser had you retained your half-pay?" For a little while I staggered through unbelief, but I was soon enabled "to trust and not be afraid." Believing, as I did, that these things were necessary for my people, and likely to promote the divine glory, I left it with my Heavenly Father to provide the silver and the gold, if it were his will these things should go on. And now, reader, I can look back on these gone-by days, and say, that the Lord did so supply all my needs, that not one of these little undertakings was suffered to fall to the ground for lack of support! Often did help come much in the same way as on the occasion particularized, and often it came from I knew not whence, nor ever have known. Thus have I been made to see, even unto the present day, that it is a good thing to trust in the Lord. By experience I know, that He hath supplied, and by faith I do believe that "He will supply all my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

CHAPTER XXI.

“THOU SHALT REMEMBER ALL THE WAY WHICH THE LORD THY GOD LED THEE.”—Deut. viii. 2.

“IN ALL THY WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM, AND HE SHALL DIRECT THY PATHS.”—Prov. iii. 6.

IN reviewing the way by which I have been led since I quitted the navy, and the various paths of mercies and providential events through which I have been conducted,—mercies at all times unmerited, and events, as to many of them, once altogether unthought of,—I am here called on to notice and praise the Lord for the privilege of having been enabled, in my quiet retreat on shore, in some measure, to serve the best interest of those men I left afloat; though I have to condemn myself for allowing much time to pass away before any efforts were made in their behalf. It is true, that the first four years of my time on the land were fully and anxiously taken up in studies for, and in the duties of the ministerial office. Yet I fear I cannot justify myself. The enemy of souls, no doubt, suggested, “that I had now no further concern with seamen, being fully engaged in other duties, and living where such men were unknown and unthought of.” In entertaining these ideas, I fell into that ungrateful apathy which had so long pervaded

the hearts of almost all classes of the inland inhabitants of our nation—an apathy as criminal and disgraceful as any thing which stands on record to the discredit of a British population. For it had held back, even the people of God, from all sympathy, from all activity, and from all hope concerning those meritorious, but debased and ignorant men. At length, however, God put it into the hearts of a few of his servants to attempt various things for their moral improvement; or rather to assist and encourage that work which he himself had begun among them. Hence, in London and various sea-port and other towns, societies were formed, and various measures adopted for instructing and christianizing our seamen. Public meetings were also called to state their claims, to explain their real circumstances, and to enlist the best feelings of the nation in their moral welfare. These measures have been owned of God to the awakening of a portion of the country to a sense of their duty in this particular, as well as to the real spiritual benefit of many hundreds of our seamen themselves. So that, if the whole mass of our present maritime population be compared with that of twenty-five years ago, when I assembled a few of them in the C——'s *wing* for religious instruction, there will appear sufficient matter to justify our exclaiming. "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." It was my privileged lot to take a small part in that day of small things when the power of God began to be known in the conversion of several, and in the awakening of many more in our fleets, to a sense of the value of their souls. This work proceeded after I left them until the general peace, at

which time more than eighty of our ships of war had a little band of praying men on board; while the people on shore, even ministers and pious characters, were unconnected with and ignorant of the matter. When these christian seamen were paid off from the navy, and scattered through the ships of our merchants, they attracted the attention of pious landmen, who now, for the first time, began to think it not altogether in vain to attempt something in behalf of sailors: and, as was before observed, various plans and measures were adopted for their spiritual benefit. Still there was a great dearth of books of a description suited to their prejudices, habits, taste, and standard of knowledge; and knowing how difficult, or rather impossible, it is for a mere landsman to write, so as to meet these peculiarities with a good hope of success, I felt it my duty to make the attempt, and eventually wrote seven tracts, and gave them to that useful institution, the *Religious Tract Society*, established in London, in 1799, and one for the *Church of England Tract Society*, instituted in Bristol, in 1811.* By which societies considerably more than half a million copies of these humble works have been circulated; and instances of the divine blessing on their perusal have not been wanting. But as the great mass of the inhabitants of the interior were as ignorant of the real state of our seamen, as these seamen were ignorant

The Bristol tract is called "*The Prayer Book at Sea.*" Those circulated by the London Society are "*Conversation in a Boat*"—" *The Two Shipmates*"—" *The Seaman's Friend*"—" *The Seaman's Spy Glass*"—" *The Smugglers*"—" *The Wreckers,*" and "*The Royal Review.*"

of the knowledge and fear of God, it became necessary to address them, which I was enabled to do from time to time through the medium of our religious periodicals; especially the *Christian Guardian, or Church of England Magazine*; as well as on a few occasions to advocate their cause from platforms and pulpits. Meanwhile other and more able friends had zealously embarked in this good work, so that considerable attention was excited both among the seamen themselves, and those who hitherto had neither understood their case or interested themselves in their behalf. I shall ever consider it a great privilege to have thus been permitted and enabled to throw in my mite of services here; as it has convinced some who doubted the propriety of my leaving the navy, that I could not so effectually have served my old companions by continuing in their immediate ranks, as I have been enabled to do since I quitted them. Undoubtedly, the time I passed at sea gave me habits and experience suited to the every-day *wear and tear* of real life, which I could not have acquired in a college—and, on the other hand, what I have passed through since I left the sea has imparted certain advantages not to be acquired afloat: so that in the retrospect I see abundant cause to thank and praise the Lord for both these dispensations of his providence—for thus leading me by ways I once knew not—by such, as once, I never thought of being directed in.

Connected very closely with the above subject of praise and thanksgiving is another, equally unexpected by me, for many years of my life, and at every recollection of which I feel unabated surprise, namely, that I

should ever become the author of several little volumes, and that any thing I could write should interest the public in general, and prove useful to various readers in particular. For some time after I was in holy orders, nothing could be further from my thoughts than this. Here, however, as in the circumstance of embarking in the ministerial office, the providences of God took the lead; in both I now can see the way by which he led me, so as to lay a kind of necessity on me to write. When I began this new and unexpected occupation, if I may so term it, in drawing up the first paper of the Retrospect on one second of February evening,* I had no intention of proceeding to a second number, nor any object in view but that of gratifying a very few intimate friends, and particularly my kind and beloved vicar, whose father-like regards led him to take a deep interest in all my past wanderings and pursuits. The public and the critics were alike out of my thoughts, and out of my hopes and fears, even after I had increased my papers to several numbers. The fact is, I wrote to gratify a few dear friends; these friends were pleased and amused, and in pleasing them I gratified myself; never dreaming that others would at all enter into their feelings. Thus I actually began my authorship, without an intention and scarcely a thought of what was taking place. And now, I again repeat it, that whenever I reflect on this circumstance, and remember all the way by which the Lord my God hath led me in this once so unexpected a department, I am almost lost

* See Chapter II.

in astonishment, that such a thing should ever have come to pass, and more so, that my poor productions should have proved so acceptable as they have done; and that the Lord should have smiled upon them so as, through their medium, to seal instruction to the souls of men! Were it necessary to multiply instances in illustration of that motto, "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days;" I could add many from this source, especially from what a gracious God has been pleased to do by the instrumentality of this little volume. I will name, however, but one instance; and may the recollection of this one, even if there were no others to reflect on, make me humble and thankful, as I ought to be.

The scene of this tale was H——y, in Berkshire. The subject of it a young man, a naval lieutenant on half-pay, and the informant was my friend, the then pious minister of that place, but now of one of the new churches in London. What the general course of this young man's life had formerly been I know not; but certainly he did not profess the principles of infidelity, properly so called, for he rather prided himself on being a church-man, as he called himself, and was greatly disposed to build his hopes of heaven on the supposed goodness of his own heart. One thing, however, was very clear, that he had passed his days in great ignorance of the doctrines of Christianity, as distinguished from heathen morality, and that he attached much of a popish idea of absolution from sin, to the receiving the ordinance of the sacrament of our Lord's Supper, an error by no means uncommon among tens of thousands

in this land! Being in the last stage of a consumption, Lieutenant B. sent an authoritative kind of message for the minister to come and administer to him that ordinance of which he knew so little, but from which he expected so much. Happily for him, he had not to do with a blind leader of the blind on such an occasion. On entering the room, my friend soon learnt that he had to deal with a haughty, self-righteous, and uncourteous man; and in the mildest way possible gave him to understand, that it would be more profitable were they to hold a few conversations on the nature of this ordinance, and the state of mind most acceptable to God in those who participate of it. To this very timely and reasonable proposition Lieutenant B. replied, "Ah, I expected something of this kind. I suppose I am not saint enough in your opinion." As he then appeared incapable of being softened down, this interview closed with mutual dissatisfaction on both sides; indeed, it was a very unpleasant visit to my friend, as were several of those he afterwards paid, for the poor sick man still kept up his forbidding, self-righteous, haughty carriage; neither bowing to the arguments of the minister, nor to the authority of the word of God. At length, almost in despair, and perplexed as to what step next to take, my friend thought of the *Retrospect*, and determined on offering it for his perusal. The book was, accordingly, taken, and having been received in his usually cold and ungracious manner, it was, for the present, thrown aside. My friend now, purposely, staid away for several days, without making one call; during which interval, as it afterwards appeared, Lieutenant B. was induced to look

into the book, from feelings of mere curiosity, to learn what a person, once in his own profession, had to say on religious subjects. He then began to read; and as he proceeded, the narrative engaged his attention, until, by and by, discovering that he himself had a personal acquaintance with some of the events alluded to, he became considerably interested, and in a good temper with the book. This paved the way for a favourable consideration of the instructions and admonitions interwoven with the tales; and he read it over again, and again, until it pleased God to bless it to the enlightening of his dark understanding, and to the humbling of his proud heart; so that he now beheld himself what the word of God declares man to be,—a polluted, helpless, undone, and lost sinner, by nature and practice, who must for ever perish far from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, unless the blood of Christ Jesus cleanses from all sin, and the Holy Ghost renews the heart. In this state of mind he began to pray, and read the Scriptures; and the Lord most graciously enabled him to believe, and to find peace in believing; so that when my friend next visited him, he found him “in Christ Jesus, and a new creature,” in whom, it might be said, “old things had indeed passed away, and all things had really become new.” The stern and frowning features of his once haughty countenance were now changed for placidity and gentleness; his once rough and self-confident manner had given place to kindness and humility. It was a change visible in his countenance on the first entrance into his room, as well as in the tone of his voice, and the whole cast of his man-

ners; and it continued to prove itself the genuine work of the Spirit, by the fruits which it increasingly bore during the brief continuance of his earthly course; so that my friend had now as much pleasure and comfort in his society, as once he had pain and distress. The Lieutenant's partiality for the *Retrospect* led him to form the resolution of sending a copy to each of his old naval companions, whom he had left in a similar state of spiritual ignorance and unconcern with himself; fondly hoping that the work might prove as useful to them as it had been to himself. It was well that such a purpose was in his heart; but the Lord saw good not to permit the execution of it. The days of his servant were about to be numbered; his strength was rapidly brought down by the way; and after a little more of bodily weakness, the soul was removed hence, not to a world of unfulfilled purposes or unsatisfied desires, but to a kingdom where the inhabitants are filled with all the fulness of God.

Here I must bring my *retrospect of later days* to a close; thankful and happy if any thing I have related of myself should exhibit the grace and goodness of my heavenly Father, and be the means of encouraging but one of my readers to active exertions for the benefit of others. We all know that vanity and self-conceit are qualities which not only bring on us the merited contempt of our fellow men, but the solemn displeasure of our God. Hence, as we would honestly desire the good opinion of the one, and stand in awe of the power of the other, we should watch against these temptations. But at the very time we are guarding against these,

we have need to be equally on our guard, lest we are tempted to hide our little talent in the napkin of self-indulgence, love of ease, or fear of man. What I have done, so far as abilities for the work are required, thousands of others might do likewise, whenever placed in correspondent circumstances. Most ignorant should I be of myself, were I not sure, that I possess no extraordinary powers of mind or body, but many infirmities of both; no eminent talents, either literary, scientific, or practical. What I have I would bless and praise the Lord for; while, with the most unfeigned humility, I would confess my want of due improvement of them. Only let my readers pray each for himself, from the heart, Lord, what wilt thou have *me* to do? and they may rest assured, that whatever be their respective stations in life, or their talents for working, the Lord will open a suitable field to their view, and be with, and bless their endeavours to serve him in it.

And now, christian reader, farewell! Behold, the time is short, it therefore behoves me to arise, and go forth with all my might to do, myself, what I have enjoined on thee. The down-hill of life is before me, and in the valley lies that grave wherein no man can work. How smooth, or how rugged the declivity may be is known only to Him who has promised "to be with his people even unto the end; and never to leave or forsake them."

Many a christian stranger, and not a few of my beloved christian friends, who once amused themselves by reading the former editions of this little book, will never peruse this. For they have entered that house appointed

for all living; they are gathered unto their fathers, and have seen corruption. This is the inseparable consequence of the flight of time. And he who, like myself, takes a *retrospective* glance through twenty years of his life of manhood, will find himself alone in many a place where once some dear friend or relative was present to hail his approach. "For man cometh up, and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay." From this painful retrospect let us, my christian reader, look forward to that rest which remains for the people of God. Let us look forward to that world where already there is such "a great multitude of them arrived as no man can number—let us often contemplate them as standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. For they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and He that sitteth on the throne dwells among them." On earth they had their various trials, but henceforth "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more: neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." O, happy world! and happy people who possess it!

"Some of the shining number, once I knew,
And travelled with them here;
Nay, some (my elder brethren now)
Sat later out for heav'n; my junior saints below;
Long after me they heard the call of grace,
Which wak'd them into righteousness.

How have they got beyond !
 Converted last, yet first with glory crown'd ;
 Little, once, I thought that these
 Would first the summit gain,
 And leave me, far behind, slow journeying thro' the plain
 Lov'd while on earth ; nor less belov'd tho' gone :
 Think not I envy you your crown ;
 No, if I could, I would not call you down.
 Though slower is my pace,
 To you I'll follow on,
 Leaning on Jesus all the way,
 Who, now and then, lets fall a ray
 Of comfort from his throne."

TOPLADY.

Yes, and this shall urge me forward ; and every day as I hasten on I would remember all the way by which the Lord my God hath led me. And in all my ways I would, day by day, acknowlege him, who hath promised to direct all my paths. I have had, as thou, my christian reader, art now aware of, some experience of his presence with me in past years, and trials, and dangers ; and still relying on him I shall be in safe hands for the future. Often hath this gracious Lord disappointed all my fears ; and often hath he interposed his shield of power and love for my defence. " He can bear me through every future event, and lift me above all the turmoils and disquietudes, all the sorrows and sufferings connected with the remainder of my short journey in the wilderness ; and when I come to its very margin, he can carry me through the stream of the river, and through the shadow of the dark valley, in such a manner as that I shall fear no evil." May it be so, O thou God of all grace and consolation, for thy beloved Son's

sake, even until I awake up in thy likeness, and am for ever satisfied with it.

“O glorious hour! O blest abode!
Thus to be near and like my God!
Where flesh and sin no more controul
The sacred pleasures of the soul.”

END.









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